

**The relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement,
job characteristics and intention to quit**

Elzette Pieterse-Landman



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Supervisor: Mr Gawie G. Cillie
Department of Industrial Psychology
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

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Declaration

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Abstract

In the current recessive times, in which the war for talent is rife, organisations and researchers are increasingly taking interest in how not only to retain their talent, but also to optimise their leadership and engagement practices to maximise organisational outcomes through their talent. However, research on the dynamics of the relationships between specific leadership behaviours, employee engagement, work-related factors and employee intention to quit is limited to investigating single constructs, or only the relationships between two constructs.

This study attempted to gain some insights into the relationships between perceived leader behaviour, employee engagement, job characteristics and employee intention to quit by testing a conceptual model of hypothesised relationships derived from research on the body of literature relating to these constructs. A non-experimental quantitative research design was applied using a sample of managers in a local JSE-listed manufacturing organisation ($n = 185$). Participants completed a questionnaire that measured the perceived presence of the transformational leadership style, experienced work engagement, perceived motivating potential of work and employee intention to quit. Reliability analysis was done to assess the measurement properties of the respective measures, and all scales showed adequate reliability. Univariate relationships between the measured ordinal variables, using Spearman correlations, corroborated all hypothesised relationships between the respective constructs.

The results indicate that there are significant positive relationships between transformational leadership and employee engagement, the motivating potential of a job and employee engagement, and transformational leadership and the motivating potential of a job. Also significant negative relationships exist between transformational leadership and intention to quit, and employee engagement and intention to quit. The mediating effects of employee engagement, as measured using Sobel's test, confirm engagement to be a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit, as well as of the relationship between the motivating potential of a job and intention to quit.

This study adds to existing literature on intention to quit, transformational leadership, employee engagement and job characteristics (motivating potential of a job) by providing insights into the strength and directions of relationships among these constructs. Furthermore, it provides valuable insights into the mediating effects of the engagement construct. The findings of this study provide valuable information to consider in business practice for the development of interventions aimed at mitigating turnover behaviour and maximising organisational outcomes through an engaged workforce. The limitations and recommendations of the study provide insights into possibilities that could be explored in future research.

Opsomming

In die huidige tyd van resessie is organisasies in gedurige stryd om hul talent te behou. Navorsers en organisasies is dus toenemend besig om te ondersoek hoe om hul leierskap en menslike hulpbronne sodanig aan te wend om optimale resultate vir die organisasie te verseker. Die navorsing verwant aan die dinamika tussen leierskapsgedrag, betrokkenheid, taakeienskappe en intensies tot bedanking is beperk tot ondersoeke ingestel op slegs enkele konstrunkte, of op die verhouding tussen twee van hierdie konstrunkte.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om nuwe insae te bied oor die verhoudings tussen hierdie konstrunkte. Dit is bereik deur ondersoek in te stel na die hipotese wat opgestel is in die vorm van 'n konseptuele model oor hierdie verhoudings op grond van die inligting wat deur die literatuurstudie gelewer is. 'n Nie-eksperimentele kwantitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is toegepas op 'n steekproef ($n = 185$) bestaande uit bestuurders in 'n vervaardigingsmaatskappy wat op die JSE gelys is. Deelnemers aan hierdie studie het 'n vraelys voltooi wat die transformasionele leierskapstyl, betrokkenheid, waargenome motiveringspotensiaal van werk (taakeienskappe) en intensies tot bedanking gemeet het. Die betroubaarheidsanalise gedoen op die verwante meetinstrumente het voldoende betroubaarheid gelewer. Eenvariantverhoudings tussen die ordinale veranderlikes is met Spearman korrelasies gemeet en die resultate het alle hipoteses oor die verwante verhoudings tussen hierdie konstrunkte bevestig.

Die uitslae het getoon dat daar beduidende positiewe verhoudings bestaan tussen transformasionele leierskapsgedrag en betrokkenheid; die motiveringspotensiaal van werk (taakeienskappe) en betrokkenheid; en transformasionele leierskapsgedrag en die motiveringspotensiaal van werk. Dit het verder ook aangedui dat daar beduidend negatiewe verhoudings bestaan tussen transformasionele leierskapsgedrag en intensies tot bedanking, asook tussen betrokkenheid en intensies tot bedanking. Die modererende gedrag van die betrokkenheidskonstruk is deur die Sobel toets gemeet en het bevestig dat hierdie konstruk 'n bemiddelaar is in die verhouding tussen transformasionele

leierskapsgedrag en intensies tot bedanking, asook in die verhouding tussen die motiveringspotensiaal van werk (taakeienskappe) en intensies tot bedanking.

Hierdie studie dra by tot die bestaande literatuur oor intensies tot bedanking, transformasionele leierskapsgedrag, betrokkenheid en die motiveringspotensiaal van werk (taakeienskappe) deurdat dit insae lewer oor die sterkte en rigting van verhoudings tussen hierdie konstrukte. Verder dra dit by tot waardevolle insigte in die invloed van die betrokkenheidskonstruk op die werknemer se bedoeling om te bedank. Die bevindinge van hierdie studie gee waardevolle inligting om in aanmerking te neem in besigheidspraktyke gemik op die versagting van omsetgedrag in organisasies, en om optimale betrokkenheidsgedrag te verseker vir optimale uitkomstes vir die organisasie. Die beperkings en aanbevelings van die studie bied insigte en moontlikhede wat vir toekomstige navorsing aangewend kan word.

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Dedication

To my loving husband, my beautiful daughter and my wonderful family, thank you for your loving, unconditional support and understanding throughout all the precious family time I missed while I concluded this qualification.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND, RESEARCH PROBLEM, OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the current economic downturn, organisations are experiencing tremendous challenges to maintain a competitive advantage on the global front. Change has become a constant, as organisations need to reinvent themselves and become more innovative to deal with more competitive pricing structures and branding strategies to position themselves optimally in a cutthroat environment. Today more than ever, the "people component", and more specifically the ability to attract and retain the "knowledge worker" (Bargain, 2003), has become one of the most important predictors of organisational success (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008). This holds important implications for organisations that strive to be the best in their markets and to maintain a competitive advantage. They need to outsmart their competition in terms of attracting and retaining their pool of knowledge talent. They need to find ways to understand and manage the psychological mechanisms that do not only deliver excellent performance, but also prevent their talent from nurturing intentions to quit (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Bargain, 2003).

Much is written in the literature about employee engagement and intention to quit respectively, and also about the impact of leadership practices and the structure of work on these decisions made by employees (Alam & Mohammad, 2009; Banai & Reisel, 2007; Bass & Avolio, 1992; Boshoff, Van Wyk, Hoole & Owen, 2002; Elangoven, 2001; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; May, Gilson & Harter, 2004; Mester, Visser, Roodt & Kellerman, 2003; Rungtusanatham & Anderson, 1996; Sacks, 2006; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

Employee turnover, or the lack of retention, as some refer to it, has become a contentious issue in the current economic climate, especially when companies lose critical talent in times when they most need to retain their knowledge capital if they

are to remain competitive during an economic downturn. Besides the increase in skills demands brought by organisational change, reliance on these skills and experience becomes illuminated in providing a sustainable competitive advantage in times of such economic challenge. This makes employee turnover a sustainability concern, especially in the light of the time and money invested in recruitment, training and advancement of critical talent. Identifying critical organisational, job and individual factors that contribute to the employee turnover process is therefore important in this respect.

A considerable volume of literature supports the fact that intention to quit is one of the most important and immediate antecedents of turnover decisions (Elangovan, 2001; Ferres, Connell & Travaglione, 2004; Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004; Koberg, Boss, Senjem & Goodman, 1999). Whatever approach is adopted to mitigate turnover behaviour within an organisation requires a good understanding of what contributes to employees harbouring intentions to quit. The antecedents to intention to quit, however, remain an area of exploration in the literature and, while job satisfaction and commitment are the most explored factors (Elangovan, 2001), there is hardly any trace of the influence of transformational leadership and engagement on the attitudinal or cognitive manifestation of the behavioural decision to quit.

Markus Buckingham, one of the more contemporary authors on the topic of engagement, made a profound statement after extensive research with the Gallup Organisation, alluding to the fact that, when employees decide to leave a company, they leave their managers, not the company (Buckingham & Coffman, 2005). This brings the assumption that leadership practices have strong implications in the harboured intentions of employees to quit. In essence, this implies that an engaged workforce is less likely to quit their jobs, and that it is managers that essentially affect the extent of such engagement.

While barriers to engagement are well explored in the literature, the leadership practices that could be deployed to foster engagement remain under-scrutinised (Shuck & Wollard, 2009). In the work of Sacks (2006), however, transformational leadership specifically has been proved to have an impact on engagement. The link

between transformational leadership and engagement becomes more evident when exploring the work of Burns (1978), Bass and Avolio (1992) and Kouzes and Posner (2007). Conceptualised by Burns, this transformational leadership style is considered an expansion of transactional leadership, focusing not only on the transactional relationship between leader and follower, but also on the construction of an inspirational vision that has a very compelling effect on its followers. Through the application of various behavioural practices relating specifically to influence, consideration, stimulation and inspiration, these leaders manage to create an environment characteristic of conditions that deliver an innate sense of empowerment to achieve a shared vision (Burns, 1978; Bass & Avolio, 1992).

Buckingham and Coffman (2005) clearly relay the message from their research findings that individuals who harbour thoughts of leaving their employment are more likely to do so under certain conditions. Besides for the conditions affected by leadership style and engagement, the motivating potential of a job also seems to contribute to such conditions. Hackman and Oldham (1974) indicate that the motivating potential of a job is directly related to the extent to which individuals are likely to experience their work as meaningful and to provide them with responsibility and knowledge of the outcomes of their efforts, and that specific job characteristics affect these psychological states. The effect of job characteristics on these states then has certain personal and work-related outcomes, of which turnover behaviour is one (Rusconi, 2005). It would appear that there is clear merit in exploring the influence of specific leadership practices and the motivating potential of a job on retention and also optimising return in an organisation's human capital investments.

Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) indicate that organisations that scored 0.43 standard deviations above the median on validated employee engagement instruments show a 103% higher success rate in specific business units than those on the lower end of the median. This makes for a compelling business case for managing employee engagement in order to ensure a sustainable competitive edge in the light of the aforementioned challenges facing businesses today.

It is the influence of the above variables on an organisation's ability to sustain a competitive edge within an economy under severe pressure that fuels this study.

There appears to be a very clear relationship between certain leadership practices and employee engagement, and the ultimate direct or indirect influence thereof on employee intentions to quit. There also appears to be a clear link between the motivating potential of a job and engagement and intention to quit. The preliminary literature review for this study seemed to indicate that the questions leaders of today should ask if they are to ensure their company's competitive advantage through their people is, "what can be done to elicit optimal performance from knowledgeable employees?" and "what can be done to prevent them from fostering intentions to quit?"

The significance of exploring this relationship between the above mentioned variables lies in the valuable insights it could deliver to organisations in terms of where they should focus their attention in their attempts to sustain economic competitiveness through their people – on leadership development, on engaging their workforce, or both.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

As indicated earlier, economic pressures and the effects of a recession bring serious challenges for organisations that strive to be the best in their markets in terms of the "people component" of their strategies to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage. People strategies therefore increasingly focus on the attraction, retention and optimisation of skilled human capital.

The problem this brings for organisations lies in identifying how they could create the type of working environment in their organisations that fosters the psychological mechanisms that deliver excellent performance and mitigate employee intentions to quit.

Much of the research on turnover has been focused on developing conceptual models of the turnover process and on identifying variables associated therewith, such as satisfaction, commitment and intention to quit (Elangoven, 2001). Further research on the circumstances that contribute to turnover behaviour have brought to

light the impact of employee engagement and job characteristics on turnover behaviour, and suggest a strong link with leadership behaviour as a determining factor for the ideal environment that mitigates turnover behaviour (Baroudi, 1985; Bergh & Theron, 1999; Bycio, Allen & Hackett, 1995; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008). However, there is little evidence in the literature on the relationship between employee engagement, transformational leadership, job characteristics and intention to quit. This study therefore aims to explore this relationship with the aim of providing valuable information on the type of practices that an organisation could focus on to foster an environment that enables optimal performance and mitigates the harbouring of intentions to quit among its employees.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to empirically explore the relationship between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics, and intention to quit among employees in the organisation in order to determine how organisations can shape their leadership and engagement practices to retain and engage employees.

A comprehensive literature study was conducted on the constructs of transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit in order to determine the inherent relationships between the constructs and their shared variables and/or antecedents. The aim was to do a comprehensive literature review in order to develop a conceptual model that reflects the nature of the relationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit, which, in turn, will provide valuable information on the practices that organisations should focus on to engage and retain their employees. This study tested this conceptual model and attendant hypotheses.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This chapter sets out to provide a contextual background for investigating the relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit in terms of the value it could bring to organisations in identifying where they should focus their attention in their attempts to sustain economic competitiveness through their people. The chapter also outlined the research problem and objectives of this study.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit, culminating in the conceptual model and the hypothesised relationships between the constructs.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research design, the sample and sampling design, the measuring instruments used for this study, as well as the statistical analyses applied.

Chapter 4 outlines the data analysis in detail, providing the results of the study and testing the hypotheses.

Chapter 5 provides a final concluding discussion of the results.

Chapter 6 outlines limitations to the study and provides recommendations for future research.

The next chapter provides a comprehensive review of the current literature related to transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The review conducted for the purpose of this study investigated the constructs of employee engagement, transformational leadership, job characteristics and intention to quit in order to explore the relationships between the various components respective to each construct and also shared between them.

Shared variables between these constructs and their roles in either causing or mediating specific organisational outcomes combine to reveal certain patterns that could suggest a strong relationship between these constructs.

To truly determine the relationship between these constructs requires an in-depth look at the respective constructs and their related variables to gain an understanding of the interconnected web of relationships that they present.

The significance of exploring these relationships is that it could provide a conceptual model of the direction of the relationships between these constructs, which, once empirically proven, could provide valuable insights into the specific psychological mix of variables that affect productivity in the organisation and that could mitigate outcomes such as employee turnover behaviour.

2.2 LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR

The widespread attention paid to leadership behaviour studies in the social sciences provides enough evidence of its importance to achieve organisational outcomes (Lok & Crawford, 2004).

Leadership behaviours can be described as those behaviours that are applied to

mobilise individuals to achieve specific objectives. They entail a reciprocal process between those who choose to lead and those who choose to follow, and involve the interplay of various factors, such as organisational structure and policy, individual values and behavioural preferences and organisational goals.

Several types of leadership styles are addressed in the literature, each with its own set of unique behaviours, of which some are related and others are completely opposite. Many definitions in the literature describe leadership in terms of the characteristics of influence on goal achievement, facilitation of team work, enthusing others to a compelling vision and inspiration (Appelbaum, Bartolomucci, Beaumier, Boulanger, Corrigan, Dore, Girard, & Serroni, 2004; Bean, 2003; Doyle & Smith, 2001; Lussier, 2006; Miner, 1992; Werner, 2001; Yukl, 2006).

While there is still much debate in the literature about what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders or non-leaders, there seems to be a body of literature that outlines the types of leadership behaviours that impact on organisational outcomes and employee motivation. These typically include the following (Griffin, Patterson & West, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 2006; Loke 2001; Miner, 1992; Spangenberg & Theron, 2002; Tyagi, 1985):

- The ability to articulate a shared vision aligned to follower values
- A sense of selflessness and passion in placing the organisation's goals before their own
- An inspirational sense of confidence and determination in achieving the company's vision
- A sense of selective motivation in pursuit of the vision
- A sense of risk taking in introducing change and challenging the status quo
- An expectation of strong commitment and expression of confidence to achieve
- A sense of investment of time and coaching in follower development
- Leading by example and modelling desired values and traits
- An innate sense of integrity in the execution of promises and objectives
- Providing recognition and celebrating success

In the literature on leadership styles, transformational leadership stands out specifically in relation to the aforementioned behaviours and is regarded as an appropriate leadership style to adopt in times of turbulence and change, especially in South Africa (Ackerman, Schepers, Lessing & Dannhauser, 2000; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). This paradigm in relation to other styles transcends a sense of self-interest in pursuit of the greater organisational goals.

There are three predominant leadership styles, each with its own respective characteristic behaviours: laissez-faire leadership, transactional leadership and transformational leadership. These three leadership styles will be discussed next.

2.2.1 Laissez-faire leadership

Bass (cited in Vinger and Cilliers, 2006) describes laissez-faire leadership as non-leadership due to the lack of attempts made by this leader to motivate others, recognise their individual contributions or reward their efforts. This is an inactive or passive form of leadership, in terms of which the leader avoids decision making and providing feedback to subordinates.

Harter and Bass (cited in Mester et al., 2003) point out a noteworthy distinction between passive management-by-exception and laissez-faire leadership, where the former is concerned with guarding and respecting the status quo and the latter is ignorant thereof, thus avoiding their supervisory responsibilities.

2.2.2 Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership is concerned with an exchange relationship between the leader and the follower, where the leader clearly outlines the requirements for the role and specifies the related rewards for the achievement thereof (Mester et al., 2003; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

Specific behaviours related to this leadership style are contingent rewards and reinforcement, active management by exception, and passive management by exception (Mester et al., 2003; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). When applying contingent rewards and reinforcement, these leaders use rewards and praise to motivate their followers to achieve what they have agreed to. When applying active management by exception, they monitor follower performance and take corrective action when irregularities occur. When applying passive management by exception, they wait passively for mistakes to occur or for things to derail from plans before taking corrective action or reprimanding their followers. Behaviours associated with contingent rewards therefore involve positive reinforcement, whereas those associated with management by exception (active and passive) involve more corrective actions and negative reinforcement.

2.2.3 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is probably best defined in relation to the leader's effect on his/her followers, where the followers feel trust, loyalty and respect toward the leader and are motivated to achieve beyond expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1992; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). This leadership behaviour style is concerned primarily with creating an innate connection with one's followers and then inspiring a heightened sense of motivation, morality and influence over attitudes. During this relationship, the followers develop an increased awareness of transcendent collective interests, which the leader channels towards greater organisational success and extraordinary goal achievement (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Northouse, 2007).

There is some evidence in the literature that alludes to transformational leadership being the most appropriate leadership style for managing the changes faced by South African organisations today (Huysamen, Schepers & Zaaiman, 2003).

The literature outlines two distinct models of transformational leadership, both with very clear overlap in terms of the specific characteristics noteworthy to the leadership style.

2.3 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODELS

2.3.1 Bass and Avolio's Model of Transformational Leadership

It would seem from the literature that the earliest conceptualisation of transformational leadership was that of Burns (1978) in as early as 1978 (Huysamen et al., 2003, Schlechter & Engelbrecht, 2006, Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). Burns laid the foundation for this theory, which was built on by others such as Bass and Avolio (1992) and Conger and Kanungo (1998). Bass and Avolio (1992) highlighted as early as in the 1990s the importance of developing transformational leaders in order to be responsive to change and to innovate within organisations. These leaders are believed to inspire desires within their followers to achieve and engage in self-development, and to promote the development of groups and organisations by arousing a heightened awareness of key issues and increasing the confidence of followers. They are influential, considerate, stimulating and inspirational.

In this model there are four behavioural components of transformational leadership, which can be outlined as follows (Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Horwitz, Daram, Brandt, Brunicardi, & Awad, 2008; Mester et al., 2003; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006):

Idealised influence is concerned with charismatic actions by the leader related to values, beliefs and mission. In this component, it is believed that charismatic behaviour by the leader fosters strong emotional bonds with followers based on faith, trust, respect and pride. The behaviour of the leader becomes idealised and manifests in collective values and actions within the organisation, as the leader provides a compelling vision, mission and high standards for emulation.

Individual consideration is where the leader recognises the individual's uniqueness and individual needs and provides support, encouragement and coaching, delegation, advice and feedback for personal development. Such leaders also link the individual's needs to that of the organisation to enable opportunities for growth and self-actualisation.

Intellectual stimulation involves behaviour by the leader that encourages new ways of solving problems and innovative ways of executing daily responsibilities by challenging the beliefs and values of the followers, as well as that of their leaders and the organisation. The leader appeals to the followers' logic and analysis and the followers are encouraged to take intellectual risks and challenge the status quo.

Inspirational motivation involves the development and communication of an appealing vision that provides shared and challenging goals, and arouses team spirit, enthusiasm and optimism by modelling the behaviours that are deemed appropriate. It involves energising the followers in their beliefs to achieve a challenging but achievable vision.

2.3.2 Kouzes and Posner's Model of Transformational Leadership

Research has been undertaken over the last 22 years on similar leadership theories, such as visionary leadership, charismatic leadership and transformational leadership (McCroskey, 2008). Perhaps two of the most noteworthy researchers of transformational leadership are James Kouzes and Barry Posner. In their model of transformational leadership, they outline five key leadership behaviours, namely modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Each of these practices is outlined in detail as follows (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; McCroskey, 2008):

Model the way involves earning the right and respect to lead through direct individual involvement and action. It involves identifying, articulating and standing up for one's values and beliefs as a leader. Once these elements are in place, the leader must align his actions with shared values and set an example by consistently living by them. Shared values provide people with a common language, which fosters commitment, enthusiasm and creativity.

Inspire a shared vision involves enlisting followers in a shared vision driven by an image of what they believe the organisation can potentially become. Such a vision must be crafted from personal and organisational values and should excite followers

and provide them with a sense of meaning and value. This requires an innate understanding of their needs, dreams, hopes, aspirations and values. It therefore involves crafting a vision with long-term future value and then inspiring others to enlist in this vision by appealing to their shared values and aspirations.

Challenge the process involves challenging the status quo, taking initiative, supporting good ideas and encouraging change. It involves seeking and leveraging opportunities for both the business and for individuals to grow and improve. It also involves taking risks, generating small wins and learning from mistakes.

Enable others to act involves empowerment through teamwork, development and trust. It involves encouraging team work by fostering cooperative goals and trust and creating opportunities to learn and grow by sharing power and discretion.

Encourage the heart involves supporting individuals to achieve the shared vision by cheering them on, acknowledging contributions and celebrating success. It involves recognising contributions, showing appreciation for individual excellence and linking rewards to performance. It also involves celebrating achievements by creating a spirit of community.

It is clear from Bass and Avolio's as well as Kouzes and Posner's models of transformational leadership that the application of this leadership style involves behaviours that deliver a shared vision to which the leader is committed and that the leader inspires and empowers others to achieve. This is done with the ultimate objective of achieving more with less. It involves creating substantive change in profits and direction and also in the attitudes of employees and the organisation, and achieving a sense of moral elevation (Schlechter & Engelbrecht, 2006).

With the demands brought on by the 21st century and the recent global economic downturn, managers are increasingly aware of the challenges they face in such rapid and complex change. The impact of such challenges on individuals and managers and their respective roles within the organisation has changed perceptions of leadership and leader-follower roles (Mester et al., 2003).

There is an increasing body of research that explores the impact of perceived leadership behaviour on organisational outcomes through employee attitudes and behaviours, with specific reference to employee intentions to quit (Alam & Mohammad, 2009; Bertelli, 2007; Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2007; Kelty, 2005; Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2006; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Rivera & Tovar, 2007). There is also no doubt that, given such economic pressures as referred to above, this body of research will become more and more refined as researchers and organisations search for opportunities to optimise positive organisational outcomes by leveraging current resources, such as their leader-follower relationships. This will require, among others, an in-depth look at the dynamics of specific leadership styles and the impact thereof on follower behaviour and ultimate organisational outcomes, such as turnover behaviour. For the purpose of this study, this dynamic is explored to some extent by way of exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit later in this literature review.

2.4 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RELATED VARIABLES

A review of the literature on employee engagement over the past 20 years indicates growing interest by Human Resource and other business professionals due to the outcomes it claims to deliver. Employee engagement is well presented in the literature in the context of its importance to organisations being healthy, safe and motivated and having productive employees who are less likely to be absent or leave the organisation, as well as to improved customer satisfaction ratings and increased work outcomes or revenue (Shuck & Wollard, 2010)

Shuck and Wollard (2010) were the first to deliver a comprehensive review of the development of the employee engagement construct and provide an integrated definition, organising the literature dating back as far as the first work related to employee engagement as cited by Kahn.

Kahn was the first to define engagement as a separate construct (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). He suggested that each performance is only as good as the amount of self that is presented in it, and defined engagement as "the simultaneous employment

and expression of a person's preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and others, personal presence (physical, cognitive and emotional) and active full role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p.700).

To measure this degree of self, Kahn developed and defined the concept of personal engagement and disengagement. He distinguished between three psychological conditions that contribute to engagement, which builds on Hackman and Oldham's work related to the psychological states that influence the motivating potential of work (Kahn, 1990). These conditions are psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability (Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004). Meaningfulness was defined as "the positive sense of return on investment of self in role performance" (Shuck & Wollard, 2009, p. 99). Availability was defined as the "sense of possessing the physical, psychological and emotional resources necessary" (p. 99), and safety was defined as "the ability to show oneself without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career" (p. 99). As far as disengagement is concerned, the first literature in which the negative antithesis to engagement was conceptualised was that of Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (cited in Shuck and Wollard, 2010), who posited engagement to be the opposite of burnout. They defined engagement as "a persistent positive motivational state of fulfilment in employees that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption" (p.99). Vigor is characterised by high energy, mental resilience, and willingness to invest effort in one's work. Dedication is characterised by strong involvement, enthusiasm and pride in one's job, and feeling inspired and challenged. Absorption is characterised by concentrating fully on one's work and being totally immersed on one's work (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Mostert & Rathbone, 2001; Stander & Rothmann, 2010).

The conceptualisations of engagement posed by Kahn, Maslach and Schaufeli (in Shuck and Wollard, 2010) overlapped very well conceptually, in that vigour overlaps with the physical dimension, absorption with the cognitive dimension and dedication with the emotional dimension. This work provided a good foundation for later theories to be built on (Stander & Rothmann, 2010).

One of the most noteworthy conceptualisations of engagement to follow was the

work by Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, using research backed by Gallup data and published in "*First break all the rules*" by Buckingham and Coffman (2005). They defined engagement as the employees' involvement and satisfaction with their work, as well as their enthusiasm for their work (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, as cited in Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Their work was the first to link the concept of engagement with improved business unit performance and profits, making the ground-breaking link that took the term engagement to the commercial frontier. This conceptualisation of engagement highlighted the fact that engagement should be looked at from an individual perspective, one micro-component at a time.

May et al. (2004) was the first to test Kahn's three domains of meaningfulness, safety and availability. Building on the work of Kahn, they tested the mediating effects of these three psychological conditions on employee engagement and found a significant positive relation to engagement (May et al., 2004). Following their work was the ground-breaking work of Saks (2006), who provided the first academic research into specific antecedents and consequences of employee engagement (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). He presented a model of employee engagement as reflected in Figure 2.1. Saks (2006) found the following in this research study:

- That there is a meaningful difference between job and organisational engagement
- That perceived organisational support predicts both
- That job characteristics predict job engagement and procedural justice predicts organisational engagement
- That both types of engagement mediated the relationships between the antecedents and job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to quit and organisational citizenship behaviour

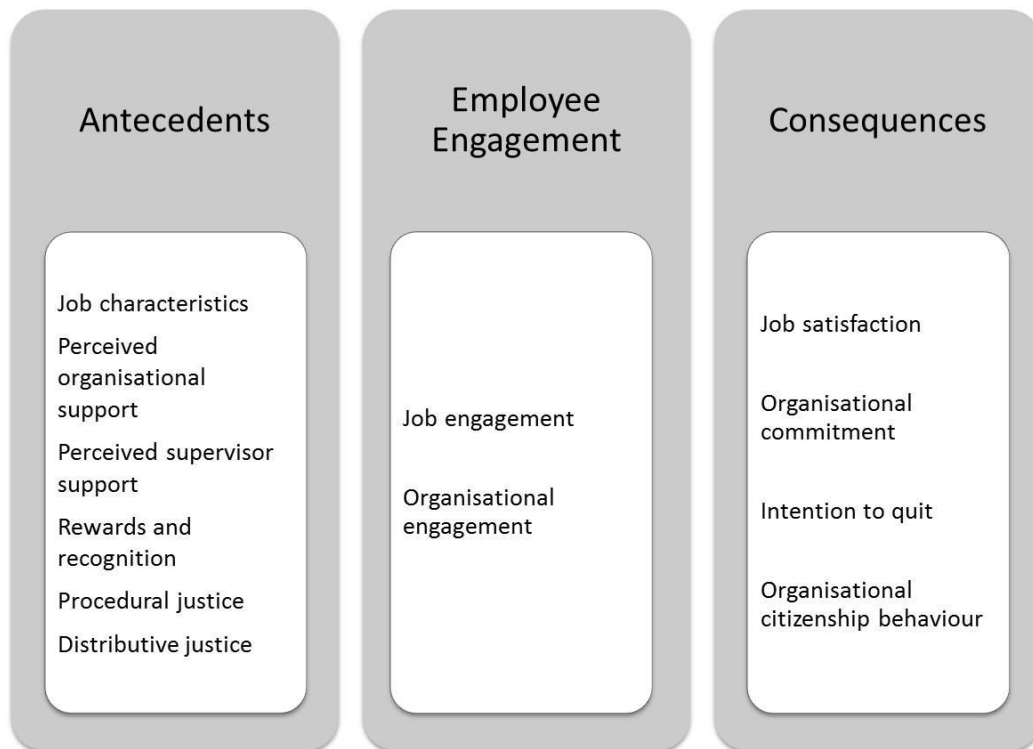


Figure 2.1: A model of antecedents and consequences of employee engagement

(Sacks, 2006, p. 604)

The work of Sacks provided a significant link between employee engagement and the intention to quit, and also between employee engagement and job characteristics.

Macey and Schneider's research findings (cited in Shuck and Wollard, 2010) were the next pioneering work to follow. Similar to the work of Sacks, they drew significant parallels from former research on engagement and delivered a conceptual model of engagement that distinguishes between trait engagement (directly affected by job design attributes), state engagement (directly affected by the presence of a transformational leader), and behavioural engagement (indirectly affected by transformational leadership by virtue of its direct impact on trust). Their work provided a significant link between engagement and job characteristics theory, and particularly between engagement and leadership theory, suggesting the importance of the role of leadership behaviours in mediating employee engagement.

Schaufeli, Salanova and Bakker's (2002) research findings counter Maslach and Leiter's definition of engagement as the opposite of burnout, positing that burnout and engagement are two distinct concepts that should be assessed independently. They indicate that, while these two constructs are opposite psychological states, an employee who scores low on an engagement scale is not necessarily burnt out and, reversibly, an employee who is not burnt out is not necessarily engaged. They therefore define engagement as follows:

"Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour. Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Absorption is characterised by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (Schaufeli et al, 2002, p. 74).

Shuck and Wollard (2010, p. 103) provide a synthesised definition of engagement as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes." This definition serves as a well-integrated product of the work of all the aforementioned pioneers of engagement, providing a clear and valuable base for continued future research. It denotes a clear nutshell encapsulation of the individual and task characteristics that deliver the state for desired organisational outcomes.

While it was particularly the employee engagement construct being explored in this section of the literature review, it is evident from the work of the aforementioned authors that certain relationships emerge between the antecedents or variables related to employee engagement and those of the other constructs related to this study. There is evidence of a relationship between employee engagement and leadership behaviour (Macey & Schneider, cited in Shuck & Wollard, 2010), and also

between employee engagement and intention to quit (Sacks, 2006). There is also evidence of the impact of job characteristics on employee engagement (Sacks, 2006). These relationships are explored further later in this literature review.

2.5 THE JOB CHARACTERISTICS MODEL

While still limited, there is evidence in the literature of the impact of job characteristic variables on turnover intentions in employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; Houkes, Janssen, De Jonge & Bakker, 2003). The Job Characteristics Model has emerged from early motivation and job enrichment research. It denotes that the types of positive personal and work outcomes characterised by high work motivation, high work satisfaction, high quality performance and low absenteeism and turnover are obtained from three critical psychological states (Rusconi, 2005). These are experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work, and knowledge of the result of the work activities (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). This model is presented in Figure 2.2.

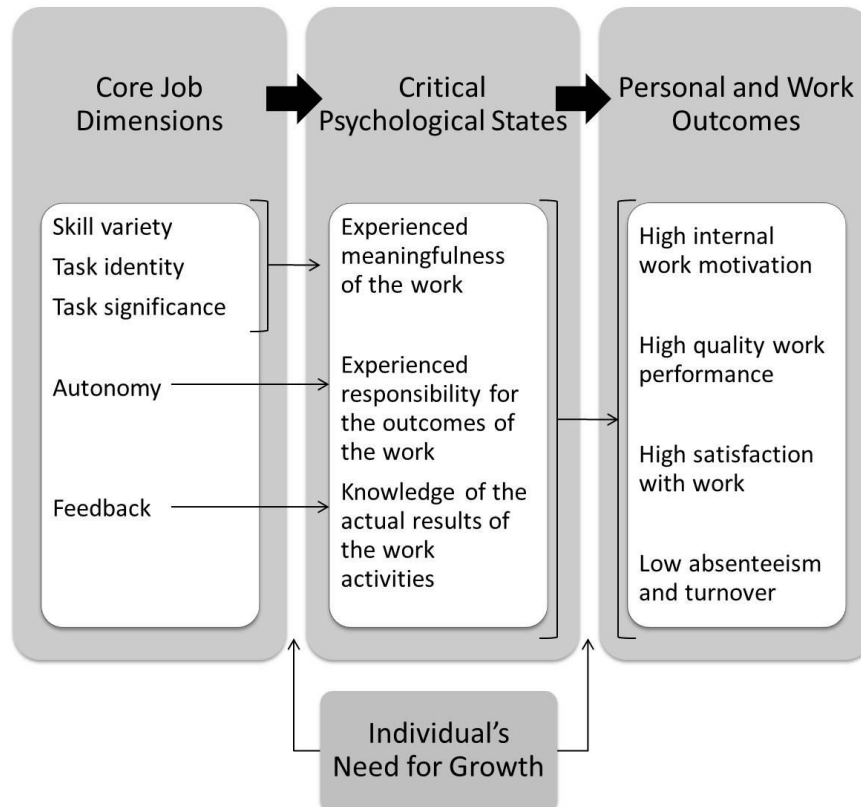


Figure 2.2: Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model

(Adapted from Rusconi, 2005, p. 16)

According to this theory, these three critical psychological states are created by five core job dimensions, also referred to as job characteristics, which together determine the motivation potential of a job. These characteristics are:

- skill variety – the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve a number of different skills and talents of the employee.
- task identity – the degree to which the job requires completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work from beginning to end with a visible outcome.
- task significance – the degree to which a job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other individuals inside or outside the organisation.
- autonomy – the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion of the employee in scheduling the work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.
- feedback – the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance.

In Hackman and Oldham's (1974) theory, an individual's "growth need strength" becomes a moderator of the extent of motivational value experienced from the job's task characteristic composition, in that individuals who do not value personal growth may find a job of high motivational potential anxiety provoking, thus causing them to leave an organisation. This leaves to the argument that the inverse is also true. An individual who does value personal growth will find a job with low motivational potential unsatisfying, and may ultimately also leave the organisation.

Other moderators that have been found to have an impact on the extent of motivational value arising from task behaviours as denoted in the 1980 version of the Job Characteristics Model are knowledge and skill and context satisfaction (Rungtusanatham & Anderson, 1996). According to Hackman and Oldham's (1974) theory, for jobs with high levels of the job characteristics, individuals with sufficient knowledge and skill will derive positive feelings from their work, while those with insufficient competence to perform well will experience unhappiness and frustration because the job is important to them, but they are not performing well in it. The

context satisfaction moderator, on the other hand, determines the willingness or ability to take advantage of the opportunities for personal accomplishment provided by enriched work based on the extent of satisfaction with aspects of the work context (Rungtusanatham & Anderson, 1996).

The Job Characteristics Model provides valuable information for the construct of work to be meaningful enough to elicit the required levels of motivation within incumbents.

2.6 INTENTION TO QUIT AND RELATED VARIABLES

Intentions are the most immediate determinants of actual behaviour (Igbaria & Greenhaus, cited in Alam & Mohammad, 2009). Turnover has been an important topic of research in many disciplines, most of which have focused primarily on identifying antecedents for and developing models of the turnover process. Turnover and retention are referred to interchangeably in the literature. Ensuring retention of knowledge workers refers to those actions involved in getting employees to stay with the organisation and minimise voluntary turnover (Jackson & Schuler, cited in Pienaar & Bester, 2008). To achieve this requires an understanding of what causes turnover so that effective measures can be taken to prevent it.

The most important and immediate antecedent of turnover is intention to quit (Elangoven, 2001). Intention to quit is the strength of a person's view that he/she wishes not to stay with a specific organisation and represents a cognitive manifestation of the behavioural decision to quit (Boshoff et al., 2002; Elangoven, 2001).

Among the earliest pioneers to clarify models and antecedents of intention to quit are Mobley and also Steers and Mowday, dating back to 1977 and 1981 respectively (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Boshoff et al., 2002; Elangoven, 2001; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). These authors indicated that an employee's decision to leave an organisation starts with an evaluation by the individual of his/her current situation and experience of work. He/she then moves through several other stages until a firm decision is

finally reached, with the outcome actually being to quit.

A review of related literature has presented various antecedents for intention to quit, namely biographical or demographical variables; work-related factors; conditions of employment; extent to which work expectations are perceived to be met; conflicting standards; availability of alternatives; psychological climate; organisational citizenship behaviour; job attitude; job satisfaction; perception of control; job stress; absenteeism; boundary spanning; perceived organisational support; job satisfaction; perceived supervisor support; communication and consultation; challenging work; leadership; development opportunities; remuneration and reward; person-organisation fit; and more (Houkes et al., 2001; Rusconi, 2005; Siong, Mellor, Moore & Firth, 2006; Vorster, Olckers, Buys & Schaap, 2005). There is also evidence in the literature of the impact of leadership behaviours on intention to quit (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2007; Kelty, 2005; Lee, 2000; Siong et al., 2006)

Among these antecedents were a prominent few that stood out in the literature review conducted for the purpose of this study, in that they were also shared as either cause or affect among the antecedents of one or more of the other two constructs in this study. For this reason, only these most prominent antecedents will be explored in more detail within this literature study for the significance they may have in the relationship explored between the constructs employee engagement, transformational leadership, job characteristics and intention to quit. The most prominent antecedents are the following:

2.6.1 Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with and is involved in an organisation. This involves an internalisation of the values and goals of the organisation and an innate sense of feeling that his role enables him to contribute meaningfully in that respect (Dee, Henkin & Singleton, 2006; Lee, 2000).

Commitment comprises multiple components (Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Somers, 1995), including affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative

commitment. Affective commitment is characterised by an acceptance of the organisation's values and a willingness to remain. It is a more emotional attachment to the organisation. Continuance commitment is a component of affective commitment and is characterised by perceived increasing sunken costs in an organisation. Normative commitment, another component of affective commitment, is characterised by a sense of duty to support the organisation and its activities. Somers (1995) investigated these three components of commitment and their relationship to outcomes such as withdrawal intentions, turnover and absenteeism. Meta-analytic studies by Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky (2002), Meyer and Allen (1996), and Clugston (2000) showed the same findings. Somers (1995) found that affective commitment was the most consistent predictor of such outcome variables. Elangoven (2001) found a reciprocal relationship between commitment and intention to quit. He indicated that low commitment leads to greater intention to quit, which in turn lowers commitment. Boshoff et al. (2002) investigated a fourth component, work commitment, as another commitment component related to intention to quit. Work commitment involves job involvement, organisational commitment, work involvement and career commitment. These authors found that work commitment makes a major predictive contribution to intention to quit.

Overall, there is a consistent body of evidence in the literature that indicates a significant negative relationship between organisational commitment and intention to quit and actual turnover behaviour (Allen & Meyer, cited in Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Dee et al., 2006; Kelty, 2005; Ladebo, 2005; Lee, 2000; Lok & Crawford, 2004; Siong et al., 2006). It is clear that organisations could mitigate employee intentions to leave the organisation by reinforcing the relationship between the organisation and its workers through specific initiatives that will increase their sense of involvement and their identification with the organisation.

2.6.2 Perception of Person-Job and Person-Organisation Fit

Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) found in their research that perceptions of both person-job and person-organisation fit had an impact on job satisfaction and intention to quit. While these constructs are seemingly interdependent, fit with one

aspect of the work environment does not necessarily imply fit with the other. The results of their study indicated a clear distinction between these two constructs, more specifically, that person-organisation fit was a better predictor of intention to quit than was person-job fit.

2.6.3 Organisational Citizenship Behaviours

Organ (cited in Kahumuza and Schlechter, 2008: p. 6) defines organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as "...individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate, promotes effective functioning of the organization". Bergh and Theron (1999) describe OCB behaviours as something that is not written into a job description, but very necessary for successful job performance. The dimensions and behaviours associated with OCB include the following (Bergh & Theron, 1999; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008):

- Altruism (cooperating and helping others at work)
- Conscientiousness (volunteering to carry out tasks and activities that are not formally part of the job)
- Sportsmanship (following organisational rules and policies even if they are personally inconvenient)
- Courtesy (touching base with others before taking actions that will affect their jobs)
- Civic virtue (active involvement in company affairs, defending and endorsing organisational objectives)

In essence then, OCB behaviours refer to behaviours that are characterised by extra enthusiasm or effort that stretch beyond the call of duty.

In a study of the importance of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) in predicting intention to quit, Kahumuza and Schlechter (2008) found OCB to be negatively related to intention to quit.

2.6.4 Availability of Alternatives

The importance of considering the availability of alternatives in understanding intentions to quit and the turnover process has been emphasised in literature dating as far back as the early work of March and Simon in 1958, following which came Mobley's work in 1977 and Steers and Mowday's work in 1981 (Arnold & Feldman, 1982). Job search and the intention to leave have been linked in the literature to proposed development models, where a search process is linked to turnover intentions. Kirschenbaum and Weisberg (1994) found that individuals passively search available alternatives before the crystallisation of turnover intentions, and that the search only becomes active thereafter. These authors found significant correlations between actual job search and intention to leave, suggesting that actual turnover depends on the coalescence of perceived opportunities and actual opportunities in the job market.

2.6.5 Bio-demographic Variables

There are numerous bio-demographic variables that have been identified in the literature to be predictive of turnover behaviour.

Studies that investigated gender differences found that men and women differed in terms of their intentions to quit. While Boshoff et al. (2002) found that such intentions were more prevalent among males than females, Rosin and Korabik (1995) found the contrary in their study. They prescribed this prevalence to the fact that women may experience greater job demands since they perceive they have to be better than their male counterparts to get as far as them, and therefore must work harder and longer to demonstrate their worth. Kirschenbaum and Weisberg (1994) also found a higher prevalence of intention to quit among males than females.

Studies have further shown a higher prevalence of intention to quit among married employees than unmarried employees (never married, divorced, widower, co-habiting) (Boshoff et al., 2002; Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 1994). There seems to be a negative relationship between level of education and intention to quit in that those

with 12 years of schooling and less tend to show higher intentions to quit than those with diplomas, post-school certificates, and Master's or doctoral degrees (Boshoff et al., 2002; Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 1994). Age has been shown in the literature to be significantly related to intentions to quit, in that intentions to quit have a higher prevalence among either much younger or much older populations (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 1994; Krausz, Koslowsky, Shalom & Elyakim, 1995).

Tenure has great significance in terms of its relationship to intentions to quit. Steers (1977, cited in Arnold and Feldman, 1982) found tenure to be one of the single best predictors of intention to quit. Kirschenbaum and Weisberg (1994) found higher prevalence of intentions to quit among individuals with either very little tenure or considerable tenure. Kirschenbaum and Weisberg (1994) also found a relationship among earnings and intention to quit, in that such intentions were higher among individuals who earned low wages.

2.6.6 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to an employee's positive attitudinal orientation towards his/her job. It is an affective state towards certain aspects of a job, resulting from a person's appraisal of actual outcomes and all aspects of the relationship with the organisation with those outcomes that they anticipated or feel they deserve (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009; Ladebo, 2005; Martin, 2008). There are various factors cited in the literature that are causal to or have an impact on job satisfaction. These include, but are not limited to, enjoyable work; realistic promotional opportunities; fair remuneration; respectable supervisors; interpersonal relationships, company policies; working conditions; responsibility; achievement; recognition, and psychological empowerment (Avey, Hughes, Norman & Luthans, 2008; Bordin, Bartram & Casimir, 2007; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Rivera & Tovar, 2007; Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004). A few studies have been cited in Pienaar and Bester (2008) that specifically relate low levels of employee satisfaction with high levels of turnover. They also found strong relationships between job dissatisfaction and intention to quit in their research.

There is a relatively consistent indication in the research of a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover behaviour (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Bertelli, 2007; Elangovan, 2001; Ferres et al., 2004; Gaan, 2007; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2008; Martin & Roodt, 2008). Brown and Peterson (cited in Alam and Mohammad, 2009) found that job satisfaction is directly related to organisational commitment and indirectly related to turnover intentions. Siong et al. (2006), however, found both a direct and indirect influence of job satisfaction on turnover intentions.

George and Jones (1996) proposed in their research that the phenomenological experience of work is multifaceted and that a consideration of the combined effects of the different aspects of the work experience assists in understanding turnover intentions. According to these authors, three important aspects of the experience of work are value attainment (the extent to which a job helps an individual attain life values – the enduring beliefs one holds of what is appropriate), attitudes (the knowledge structures that capture how one evaluates a job – including job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and moods (the affective states individuals experience when they are engaged in their work – how one feels when performing one's job). In their research, they found that the job satisfaction and turnover-intention relationship was strongest when an individual's job did not help him attain their personal values and positive moods were experienced.

It is clear from the above that job satisfaction has an impact on the organisational outcome of turnover due to its direct relationship with intention to quit. Specific reference was made to how the structure of work relates to job satisfaction (George & Jones, 1996). Job satisfaction, with specific reference to job related characteristics, is therefore important factors to consider if a leader or organisation wishes to ensure the mitigation of turnover intentions in their employees.

2.6.7 Work Role Variables

Work-related variables such as boundary spanning, role ambiguity, role conflict and

role strain have also been found to be important antecedents of turnover intentions. Baroudi (1985) describe these variables as follows:

Boundary spanning refers to the crossing of intradepartmental and inter-organisational boundaries for the purpose of fulfilling one's duties.

Role ambiguity refers to the lack of clear information or precise definition of what exactly is expected of an individual in his role

Role conflict refers to the receipt of conflicting job performance information or expectations that exceed an individual's capabilities in a role (being overextended).

In his study of the variables of boundary spanning, role ambiguity and role conflict as antecedents of job satisfaction, commitment and turnover intentions, Baroudi (1985) found role conflict and role ambiguity to be particularly influential in their impact on intention to quit.

Role strain seems to be defined in the literature to consist of role conflict and role ambiguity (Boshoff et al., 2002). Here, role conflict refers to incongruence between the requirements of the role and the standards or conditions that enable achievement of such requirements. Role ambiguity, on the other hand, refers to the individual's perception of the clarity of the requirements and the predictability of likely performance outcomes. In their research of how role strain, among other variables, relates to intention to quit, Boshoff et al. (2002) found it to have a predictive role.

2.6.8 Perceived Support

Social support has been found to play a critical role in reducing intention to quit. Kahumuza and Schlechter (2008) proposed a three-factor perceived support construct consisting of perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support and perceived co-worker support. However, evidence from their research confirmed that it is a two-dimensional construct only.

Perceived organisational support refers to an individual's perception of the extent to which the organisation, as if personified, values his contribution and cares about his well-being – be it promised or not. When employees believe this is so, they tend to reciprocate perceived support with increased commitment, loyalty and performance

(Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2002). While perceived organisational support has been found to be significantly related to intention to quit, this relationship seems to be largely mediated by commitment and job satisfaction (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008).

Kahumuza and Schlechter (2008) revealed that a very important factor contributing to turnover is leadership. Supervisors or managers are agents of the organisation that direct, evaluate and coach employees in their pursuit of achieving organisational objectives. The extent to which they are perceived to do this well has been found to have a negative relationship with intention to quit (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008). Perceived co-worker support refers to the perceptions of positive social exchanges between employees and their co-workers, and has also been found to be a good predictor of intention to quit (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008).

The fact that perceived support seems to have an impact on employee intention to quit provides a valuable indication of the fact that organisations can mitigate intentions to quit among their employees by focusing on building strong relationships between employees with one another and with their respective leaders.

The significance of discussing the various variables that relate to employee intention to quit lies in their shared relationships found in the literature with the constructs of transformational leadership and employee engagement. The assumption is that, if the literature review reveals a relationship between these variables and transformational leadership practices, it could likely be deduced that transformational leadership has a direct impact on intention to quit. Furthermore, if relationships are found in the literature between these variables and those of the employee engagement construct, then it could likely be deduced that employee engagement has a direct impact on intention to quit. Finally, if the literature review reveals a relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement, then the strength of these relationships should reveal whether the construct employee engagement is a moderating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. This would then bring this study one step closer to identifying what organisations can do to engage and retain their employees.

The next section of the literature review outlines evidence found in the literature of the relationships found between the four constructs of employee engagement, transformational leadership, job characteristics and intention to quit.

2.7 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Macey and Schneider's model of employee engagement suggests a significant link to the transformational leadership style. In their model, behavioural engagement is indirectly affected specifically by transformational leadership through state engagement and trust (Macey & Schneider, as cited in Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

In Kahn's definition of engagement, an individual's ability to express his "preferred self" in task behaviours promotes a sense of connectedness with his work and also with others. In Kahn's distinction between the three psychological conditions that contribute to engagement, namely psychological meaningfulness, psychological availability and psychological safety, the latter is specifically concerned with the ability to show oneself without fear of negative consequence to self-image, status or career (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). This requires an innate sense of trust in one's organisation and its leadership. In Bass and Avolio's model of transformational leadership, the leader instils faith and trust in his followers, gains a sense of trust and respect and provides a vision, mission and high standards of emulation (Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Horwitz et al., 2008; Mester et al., 2003; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

State engagement is concerned with satisfaction, involvement, commitment and empowerment (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Transformational leadership is concerned with leadership through direct individual involvement, which fosters commitment, among other things (modelling the way), and empowerment through teamwork, development and trust (enabling others to act) (Kouzes & Posner, 2008; McCroskey, 2008).

Sacks (2006) found that perceived organisational support predicts both job and

organisational engagement. The role of the transformational leader is primarily concerned with individual support. Individual consideration in Bass and Avolio's (1992) model makes specific reference to the provision of support through the recognition of individual uniqueness and the provision of coaching, delegation, advice and feedback for further development. In Kouzes and Posner's (2008) model, leadership support is provided in the actions related to enabling others to act, with specific reference made to creating opportunities for others to learn and grow. It is also provided for in the leadership actions related to encouraging the heart, which specifically involve supporting individuals to achieve the shared vision by cheering them on, acknowledging contributions and celebrating success (McCroskey, 2008).

As employee engagement is also concerned with optimal performance (Buckingham & Coffman, 2005), further affirmation of the link between employee engagement and transformational leadership is found in the definition of transformational leadership in which specific reference is made to the effect that this style has on its followers by means of motivating them to achieve beyond expectations (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

It is clear from the aforementioned that there is a relationship between employee engagement and transformational leadership. It therefore is postulated for the purpose of this study that a high presence of the transformational leadership style in an organisation will likely foster higher levels of employee engagement in the workforce. The following hypothesis is formulated to represent this notion:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the perceived prevalence of the transformational leadership style and employee engagement.

2.8 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIT

There are various links found in the literature that allude to the relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit.

Shuck and Wollard (2010) allude to the fact that an engaged workforce is less likely

to be absent from work or leave the organisation. Elangoven (2001) found that intention to quit is an immediate antecedent of turnover.

Sacks (2006) found that engagement serves as a moderating variable between antecedents such as job characteristics, perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support, rewards and recognition, procedural justice, and distributive justice and the outcome of intention to quit.

Again, Macey and Schneider's definition of state engagement (as cited in Shuck and Wollard, 2010) is concerned with satisfaction, involvement, commitment and empowerment.

Job satisfaction refers to a person's positive attitude toward his job. Various studies have indicated a relationship between satisfaction and turnover, with low levels of satisfaction being related to high levels of turnover (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Bertelli, 2007; Elangovan, 2001; Ferres et al., 2004; Gaan, 2007; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2008; Martin & Roodt, 2008; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Spector, 1997). As intention to quit is a direct antecedent of turnover, it can be deducted that low levels of satisfaction are likely to also be related to high levels of intention to quit.

Work commitment consists of four elements: job involvement, work involvement, organisational commitment and career commitment (Morrow, in Boshoff et al., 2002). Job involvement is defined in terms of job performance esteem and personal identification with work, and work involvement is defined as the psychological identification with work as a human activity (Boshoff et al., 2002). Organisational commitment refers to the attachment of individuals to an organisation for various reasons relating to what could be lost if they were to leave, e.g. benefits, insurance, seniority, etc. Career commitment refers to one's attitude to one's profession or vocation.

Another form of commitment, called attitudinal commitment, involves an employee's belief in, and acceptance of, the organisation's values and goals, his willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, as well as the desire to continue

membership of the organisation (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, cited in Boshoff et al., 2002). Attitudinal commitment corresponds closely with what Somers (1995) describes as affective commitment. Allen and Meyer (cited in Boshoff et al., 2002) also allude to normative commitment, which involves feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation and a belief in one's responsibility to the organisation.

Commitment has consistently been found in the literature to have a negative relationship with intention to quit. Somers (1995), Meyer et al. (2002), Meyer and Allen (1996) and Clugston (2000) all found affective commitment to be a predictor of intention to quit. Elangoven (2001) found a reciprocal relationship between commitment and intention to quit, where low commitment leads to greater intention to quit, which in turn lowers commitment. Boshoff et al. (2002) found that work commitment makes a major predictive contribution to intention to quit.

Empowerment refers to internal task motivation that manifests itself in four cognitions: meaningfulness, competence, impact and self-determination (Ugboro, 2006). It therefore refers to an individual's orientation to his work roles. Intrinsic task motivation refers to the positive experience a person derives from motivating and satisfying work. Meaningfulness refers to the extent to which an individual finds the work goals or purpose of his work valuable in relation to his own standards. Competence refers to whether the individual has the skills and abilities required to perform the work adequately, and impact is the extent to which he is seen to make a difference in accomplishing the task successfully. Self-determination refers to the independent initiation of a person's own actions towards his work conclusion. Ugboro (2006) found that there is a statistically significant relationship between empowerment and affective commitment, and that empowerment can act as an organisational intervention that would mitigate intention to quit.

Based on the aforementioned relationships between elements of employee engagement and intention to quit, the assumption that there is a strong relationship between these constructs is strengthened. It therefore is postulated for the purpose of this study that high levels of employee engagement lead to low levels of employee intentions to quit. The following hypothesis is formulated to represent this notion:

H2: There is a negative relationship between employee engagement and employee intentions to quit.

2.9 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INTENTION TO QUIT

Various studies indicate that transformational leadership, when compared to laissez faire leadership and transactional leadership, results specifically in higher levels of satisfaction, commitment and performance (Alam & Mohammad, 2009; Mester et al., 2003; Somers, 1995). As high levels of satisfaction and commitment have also been proven to have a negative relationship with employee intentions to quit, it is logical to assume that there is a similar relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit.

According to Phillips and Cornell (cited in Pienaar & Bester, 2008), indicators such as challenging and meaningful work, autonomy and independence, participation in decision making, empowerment, feedback and competitive financial packages all result in higher levels of commitment. Transformational leadership particularly relates to this by way of activities such as challenging the status quo (challenge the process and intellectual stimulation) and empowerment through team work, shared power and discretion, development and coaching (enabling others to act and individual consideration), and also earning the right and respect to lead through direct involvement (modelling the way and idealised influence).

As cited earlier in this study, factors that contribute to job satisfaction are enjoyable work, realistic promotional opportunities, fair remuneration, respectable supervisors, interpersonal relationships, company policies, working conditions, responsibility, achievement, recognition and psychological empowerment. Transformational leadership does not only relate to job satisfaction indirectly, by virtue of the strong relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, but also directly, as follows. Respectable supervisors are provided for in the leadership practices of modelling the way and idealized influence – concerned with earning the right and respect to lead by instilling faith and trust in followers. Interpersonal relationships are provided for by the leadership practices of enabling others to act,

encouraging the heart and individual consideration – concerned with encouragement of team work, recognising individuality and fostering cooperation. Achievement and recognition are also provided for in the leadership practices of enabling others to act, encouraging the heart and individual consideration, in that these practices are also concerned with development, acknowledging performance and encouraging and celebrating achievement and success. Challenging work is provided for through the leadership practices of challenging the process and intellectual stimulation – concerned with encouraging challenge of the status quo, taking initiative and encouraging innovation and individual stretch and growth. Another important variable that contributes to job satisfaction, as cited earlier in the literature review, is the extent to which a job helps individuals to attain their life values. This is provided for in the leadership practices of inspiring a shared vision and inspiring motivation – concerned with communicating and enlisting followers in a shared vision that is meaningful in that it also aligns with their own shared values and aspirations.

It is clear from the above that there is an indirect relationship between intention to quit and transformational leadership through a set of shared variables, namely commitment and job satisfaction.

A review of the literature reveals a similar relationship through the shared variables of person-organisation fit and work role variables.

Person-organisation fit as a predictor of intention to quit (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001) relates to the leadership practices of inspire a shared vision and individual consideration, particularly by virtue of the linking of individual needs and aspirations to the values, goals and objectives of the organisation.

Work role variables refer to role ambiguity (lack of clear information or precise definition of what exactly is expected of an individual in his role) and role conflict (conflicting job performance information or expectations that exceed an individual's capabilities in a role), both simultaneously referred to as role stress (Baroudi, 1985). The leadership practices, inspired motivation and inspire a shared vision, provide for clear definitions of what exactly is expected from employees in terms of a shared vision and goals. The practices of enabling others to act and individual consideration

provide for the prevention of role conflict through empowerment, development and coaching, the provision of performance feedback and recognition, and the provision of motivation by structuring work in such a fashion that it provides for experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work and knowledge of the result of the work activities.

Characterised by behaviours such as altruism, conscientiousness and civic virtue, among others (Bergh & Theron, 1999; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008), organisational citizenship behaviour relates to transformational leadership by virtue of its nature to inspire enthusiasm or effort within followers that stretches beyond the normal call of duty.

It is clear from the above that transformational leadership has an impact on the variables commitment, satisfaction, perceived support, organisational citizenship behaviour, person-organisation fit and work-role variables. As each of these variables has a direct relationship with the outcome of intention to quit, it can be argued that transformational leadership also has an impact on employee intentions to quit.

This notion is supported in former research by Bycio et al. (1995), who found that greater degrees of transformational leadership were associated with a reduction in the intention to leave the profession among nursing staff. They found an especially significant negative relationship between the contingent reward component of transformational leadership and intention to leave, and also that affective commitment itself predicted the intention to leave to a high degree. The following hypothesis is therefore formulated to represent this notion:

H3: There is a negative relationship between the perceived presence of the transformational leadership style and the prevalence of intention to quit among employees.

In the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit, the literature study reveals a largely indirect relationship affected by variables such as respectable supervisors, interpersonal relationships, satisfaction, commitment,

challenging work, meaningful work, autonomy, independence, participation in decision making, empowerment, feedback, and competitive remuneration. Some of these variables are also shared in their presence as antecedents of the constructs employee engagement and intention to quit, and some present themselves as mediating variables in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. This has presented the speculation that the construct employee engagement could likely serve as a mediating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. The following hypothesis therefore represents this notion:

H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit.

2.10 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB CHARACTERISTICS, TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIT

Of importance to note is the fact that the variables that were most commonly shared between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit related to different job-related characteristics, such as enjoyable work, responsibility, achievement, challenging and meaningful work, autonomy and independence, participation in decision making, empowerment, feedback, and more.

While there is some evidence that denotes the impact of job characteristic variables on turnover intentions (Houkes et al., 2003; Rusconi, 2005), it remains limited. The fact that certain transformational leadership behaviours (enabling others to act, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation) are concerned with providing motivation by structuring work in such a fashion that it provides for the experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work and knowledge of the result of the work activities, gives reason to speculate a clear relationship between transformational leadership and job characteristics. It is clear from the above that job characteristics have their own noteworthy relationship with each of these three constructs. It is more specifically through the shared variables of

commitment and job satisfaction that possible relationships are speculated to be present between job characteristics and intention to quit, and between transformational leadership and job characteristics. The following hypotheses therefore present these notions:

H5: There is a negative relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and the prevalence of intention to quit among the employees of the sample group.

H6: There is a positive relationship between the perceived presence of transformational leadership style among leaders and the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics).

There is compelling reason to denote a relationship between the job characteristics model and employee engagement through state engagement specifically, as characterised by satisfaction, involvement, commitment and empowerment (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). This gave rise to the notion:

H7: There is a positive relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and employee engagement.

While it is believed that there is a direct relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit, Sacks (2006) presents evidence that engagement serves as a mediating variable between antecedents such as job characteristics and the outcome of intention to quit. This gave rise to the question whether employee engagement could possibly be a mediator in the relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit, as presented by the following hypothesis:

H8: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and intention to quit.

The above mentioned are hypothesised relationships presented in Figure 2.3.

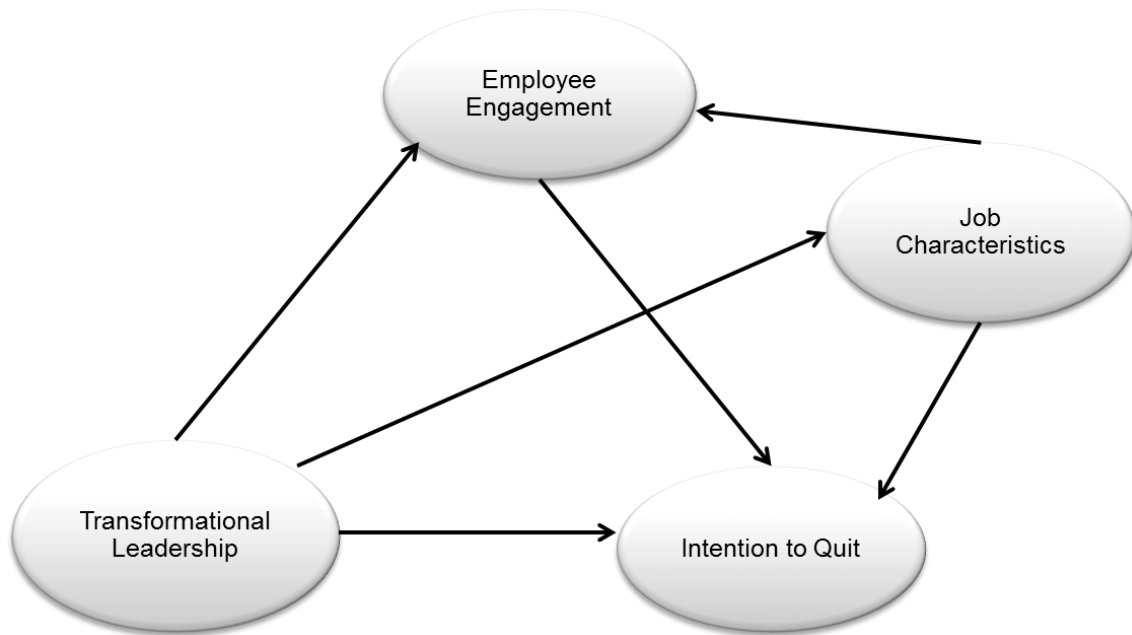


Figure 2.3: Conceptual model of the relationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit

2.11 SUMMARY

While it is believed that an engaged workforce is less likely to leave an organisation or be absent from work, the practices that bring about engagement could largely be argued to have their roots in the transformational leadership style.

Behaviours related to this style have proven to be elementary in improved levels of satisfaction, commitment and performance. Employee engagement, on the other hand, is believed to be a moderating variable among factors such as job satisfaction, perceived support, rewards and recognition and perceived justice, and the organisational outcome intention to quit. Similarly, job characteristics and how they combine to have an impact on the motivating potential of a job are also believed to impact on engagement and intention to quit.

There are various factors and outcomes that have been identified to be shared between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. This chapter explored these constructs and their

related variables in more detail to identify shared patterns in the relationships between them. The primary focus of this chapter was to present specific evidence of deducible relationships between each of the constructs. It also presents literature that alludes to the possibility that the construct employee engagement could be a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit, and of the relationship between the motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and intention to quit. Understanding the nature and direction of the relationship between these constructs will be helpful in identifying possible organisational and leadership interventions that could bring about enhanced levels of engagement and performance, as well as ameliorate employee intentions to quit the organisation.

In the next chapter the research methodology that has been employed in this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding literature review revealed that there is evidence of relationships that may exist between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit, on the basis of various inherent relationships that have been found between the related variables within each of these constructs. This study intends to empirically explore the strength and direction of relationships between these constructs in order to explicate the impact of these relationships on turnover behaviour and engagement within organisations. The theoretical research provides the groundwork from which the conceptual models and related hypotheses were formulated, and this chapter outlines the research design, sampling, measuring instruments, and data collection and analysis procedure that were deployed to test the conceptual model.

3.2 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study aims to investigate the hypothesised relationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit as presented conceptually in Figure 2.3.

It is envisaged that a better understanding of these interrelationships will enable the researcher to explain the influence of these constructs on one another, and to use this information to inform leadership practices and organisational interventions focused on sustaining organisational performance and competitiveness through effective retention and engagement of workers.

The exploration of the influence of the job characteristics construct on the relationship with the other three variables in the context of the broader purpose of

this study is aimed at further explicating the impact of these relationships on turnover behaviour and engagement. The objective is to deliver more specific informative input for human resources practices within an organisation, with particular reference to leadership and employee engagement initiatives and the structure of work.

3.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the objective of this research study, the literature review and the model presented in Figure 2.3, the following hypotheses were constructed:

Hypothesis 1:

There is a positive relationship between the perceived prevalence of the transformational leadership style and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2:

There is a negative relationship between employee engagement and employee intentions to quit.

Hypothesis 3:

There is a negative relationship between the perceived presence of the transformational leadership style and the prevalence of intention to quit among employees.

Hypothesis 4:

Employee engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit.

Hypothesis 5:

There is a negative relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and the prevalence of intention to quit among the employees of the sample group

Hypothesis 6:

There is a positive relationship between the perceived presence of transformational leadership style among leaders and the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics).

Hypothesis 7:

There is a positive relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 8:

Employee engagement mediates the relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and intention to quit.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A non-experimental quantitative research design was used for the purpose of this study. The approach was concerned with testing objective theories deductively by examining the relationship among various variables (transformational leadership, employee engagement, intention to quit and job characteristics) without manipulation or control of any one of the variables (Creswell, 2009). This design followed a correlational approach to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables (dependent and independent).

This research design may pose limitations that are important to take into consideration in the interpretation of the results. It lends itself to low internal validity and uncertainty in causal inferences from the results, as correlation does not necessarily mean causality. To avoid the inherent danger of opportunistic over-interpretation of the empirical results, specific hypotheses were formulated and a field study was conducted to investigate the relationship between and among perceived transformational leadership, engagement levels and employee turnover intentions among employees within the organisation.

3.5 SAMPLING

The sample description specifies the characteristics of the participants in a study (Creswell, 2009). The issue of sample size should be considered in the light of the nature of the study and the statistical techniques used to analyse the data, as the extent to which observations could be generalised to the larger target population is a direct function of the degree of statistical inference that can be made from the data presented by the sample.

It is recommended for validation purposes that the survey be administered to a relatively large sample (approximately 100 subjects, depending on the number of assessments used) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). For the purpose of this study, a specific sample of convenience was selected from a South African company in the fast-moving consumable goods (FMCG) industry.

An overall average of 30% representation of responses was obtained in each of the Paterson bands. While this does not reflect an ideal percentage (50%) to generalise inferences to be fully representative of the opinions of the larger population that this sample belongs to (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), the non-parametric statistical techniques used in the analysis of the data provide a reasonable degree of statistical inference that can be drawn from the results presented by this survey.

3.6 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The research questionnaire constructed for the purpose of this study was made up of the following components:

- a covering letter outlining the topic of the research and a description of the questionnaire (Appendix A)
- a consent form outlining the purpose and objectives of the research and pertinent information relating to the rights and expectations of the participants (Appendix B)
- the actual measuring instrument

The measuring instrument comprised of five sections (sections A to E) and can be viewed in Appendix C. Each section was designed to acquire a specific set of required information.

Section A was dedicated to acquiring specific demographic information from the respondents pertaining to length of service, age, home language, marital status, highest level of qualification, race, job grade and gender. While the data obtained from this section of the questionnaire is not pertinent to the study, it was included for future research purposes and for the informative value it may provide the company.

Section B measured respondent levels of engagement. It consisted of the 12-item Wright Work Engagement Scale (WWES) developed by Dr Alarcon (2009). The instrument uses a five-point Likert-type measuring scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Of the 12 items in this scale, four items were negatively worded and, as a result, needed to be reflected. The internal consistency analysis of this scale delivered an alpha coefficient score of .89, which is both acceptable and comparable to other engagement scales, specifically the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), with an alpha coefficient score of .96 (Alarcon, 2009). As the WWES is a new scale and numerous samples and studies are required to prove construct validity of any scale, the results of scale validity correlations between the WWES and the UWES ($r = .89$) indicated that these scales measure the same constructs, providing sufficient initial support of the validity of this scale.

Section C measured participant perceptions of supervisory leadership behaviours, using an adapted version of Avolio and Bass's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire – Form 5 X (MLQ-5X). This thirty-two item scale was adapted by Engelbrecht, Van Aswegen and Theron (2005) from the original forty-five item scale. For the purpose of this study, only the 20 items of the transformational leadership dimension were utilised. The items measure the frequency with which the participants perceived their direct supervisors or managers to display a range of transformational leadership behaviours. The scale consists of four sub-scales, namely Idealised Influence (eight items), Inspirational Motivation (four items),

Intellectual Stimulation (four items), and Individual Consideration (four items). The items are measured on a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = Almost never, 6 = Almost always). All the items were worded positively and therefore none of the items needed to be reflected. Sufficient evidence of reliability and validity of this measure is presented in alpha values ($.72 < \alpha < .84$) for each of the sub-scales (Engelbrecht et al., 2005).

Section D of the survey comprised a scale that measured the respondents' intention to quit the organisation. The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS), as adapted by Dhladhla (2011) from former studies, is a five-item instrument rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), with low scores indicating high intentions to leave the organisation. All items in this scale were positively worded and therefore no reflection of items was required. This instrument showed high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .89$) (Dhladhla, 2011).

Section E comprised the revised version of the Job Diagnostics Survey used to diagnose jobs and how people react to them. It provides an overall indication of motivation towards one's work, which is related directly to work engagement. It is therefore believed to provide valuable additional information relating to the impact of the structure of work in the relationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit. This thirty-item scale was revised by Idazak and Drasgow in 1987 (Rusconi, 2005), and consists of five sub-scales that measure specific job characteristics, namely Skill Variety (three items), Task Identity (three items), Task Significance (three items), Autonomy (three items) and Feedback (three items); as well as specific work outcomes, namely Internal Work Motivation (six items), General Job Satisfaction (five items), and Growth Satisfaction (four items). The items in each section of the scale were measured on a seven-point scale, ranging from the lowest scores represented by 1 to the highest scores represented by 7. In this revised version, all the items are positively worded and therefore none of the items needed to be reflected. Sufficient evidence of reliability and validity of this measure is presented in alpha values of between .68 and .84 (Rusconi, 2005).

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

A self-report survey method was used to gather data for this study. This method lends itself to the collection of large amounts of information in a relatively short period of time. As the survey was conducted over a geography that included more than one city, the questionnaires were distributed electronically. This enabled minimisation of the costs on the part of the researcher and the company, and ease of reference and time convenience on the part of the management sample to which the survey was administered. A foreword of support for this study was sent out by the HR Director to endorse the research and encourage responses. The anonymity and confidentiality of the responses were ensured by the deliberate exclusion of any requests for or means of identifying personal details within the construct of the questionnaire. Further anonymity and confidentiality of responses were ensured by means of a fax return system from centralised fax machines within the business. A total of 663 questionnaires were issued to all managers within the Paterson job grading bands C3 to C5, D1 to D5, and E. Of the 190 survey questionnaires that were returned, only 185 were usable. The remaining five were excluded from the data due to having been returned without being completed at all.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Reliability analysis was done using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. An alpha value of 0.7 was used as guideline for acceptable reliability. For testing univariate relationships between measured ordinal variables, Spearman correlations were used. Mediator effects were tested using Sobel's test (Sobel, 1982), as well as employing Partial Least Squares (PLS) path analysis (Vinzi, Chin, Henseler, & Wang, 2010). PLS path modeling is well applied to test and validate exploratory models on small samples and is especially recommended in an early stage of theoretical development (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). This method was used because it is typically known to avoid small sample size problems and to have less stringent assumptions about the distribution of variables and error terms.

Summary statistics were presented using frequency tables. The PLS path analyses were done using SmartPLS version 2.0 M3. The Sobel test was conducted using the R statistical programming language. All other statistics were conducted using Statistica 10.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined a conceptual model of the relationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. Relevant hypotheses were presented, as well as a detailed overview of the research methodology, research design, sampling design, measuring instruments and data collection procedure that were used for the purpose of this study. In the next chapter, a detailed overview and discussion of the results of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the analysis of the data is reported. First, a brief outline of the biographical results will be provided followed by the reliability results from the analysis of the psychometric properties of the instruments used in this study. After this, the results of the correlation analyses between the respective constructs in question will be discussed. The results of the regression analysis describing the mediating effect of the engagement construct will then be provided. Finally, the inclusion of the job characteristics variable within the conceptual model will be outlined.

The theoretical model derived from the literature study hypothesised specific correlational relationships between the constructs of transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. The statistical analysis that tested these hypotheses is reported in this chapter.

4.2 THE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The results obtained from the biographical section of the survey do not serve a pertinent value in the purpose of this study. However, the results of the analysis of the biographical data are included for future research purposes and for the informative value they may have for the company. These results are reported in histograms, indicating both the sample size and the number of actual respondents that completed this section of the survey.

The sample was made up of a selected group of participants comprising the entire management population of the selected company in the Paterson bands C3 to C5, D1 to D5, and E. Besides for the Paterson job grades (Figure 4.7), the participants

comprised a diverse demographically characteristic composition, including length of service (Figure 4.1), age (Figure 4.2), home language (Figure 4.3), marital status (Figure 4.4), highest qualification (Figure 4.5), race (Figure 4.6), and gender (Figure 4.8). As participation in this survey was voluntary, not all respondents completed the biographical section of the survey, and so the sample size referenced in each figure will differ slightly. Of the 190 survey questionnaires that were returned, only 185 were usable. The remaining five were excluded from the data due to having been returned without being completed at all.

4.2.1 Length of Service

Figure 4.1 presents the length of service observed within the sample for this survey. The histogram indicates that the majority of employees (90%) have between two and 21 years of service with the company, with most (37%) of them holding between 10 and 20 years of service.

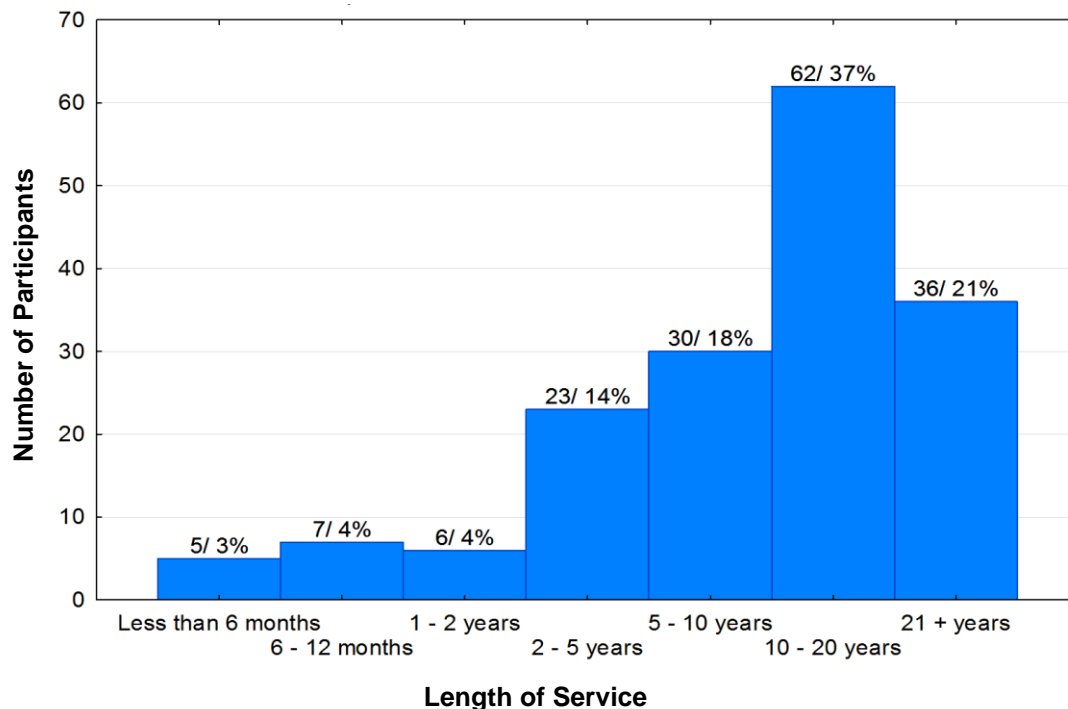


Figure 4.1: Length of service (n = 185)

4.2.2 Age

Figure 4.2 presents the age distribution of participants in this survey.

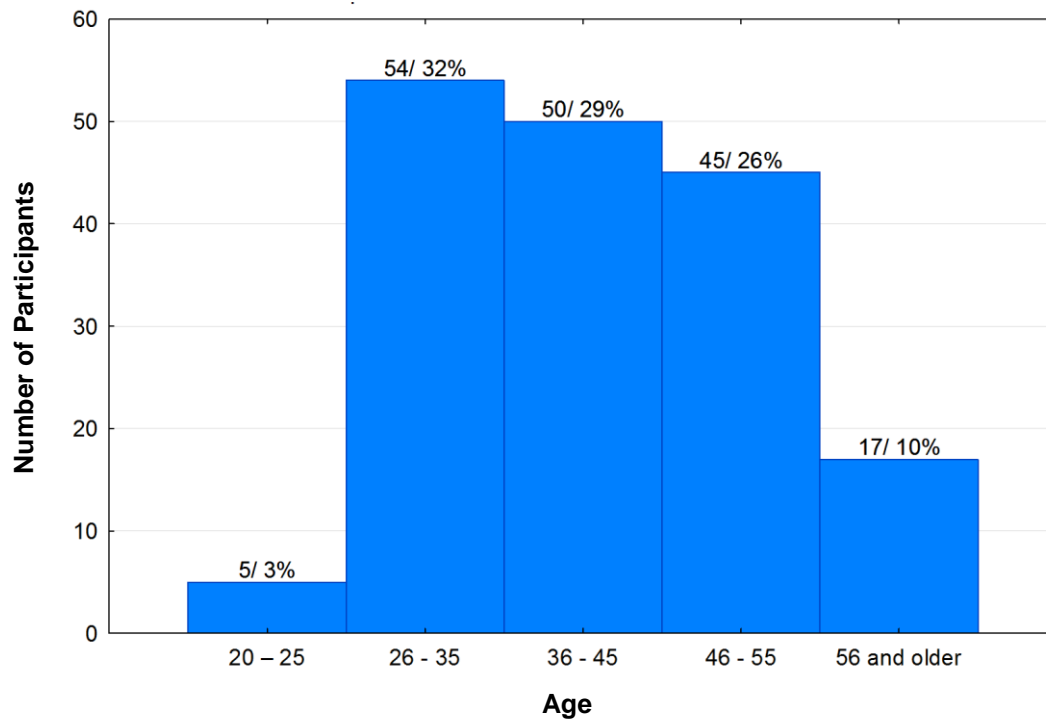


Figure 4.2: Age distribution (n = 185)

The information herein indicates that the majority of the employees (87%) in this sample are between 26 and 55 years of age, with the most being between 26 and 35 years of age.

4.2.3 Home Language

Figure 4.3 presents the home language of the participants in this survey. It would seem from this data that most (61%) individuals in this sample are Afrikaans speaking, followed by the second most that are English speaking (35%). There seems to have been no representation of the Xhosa as home language.

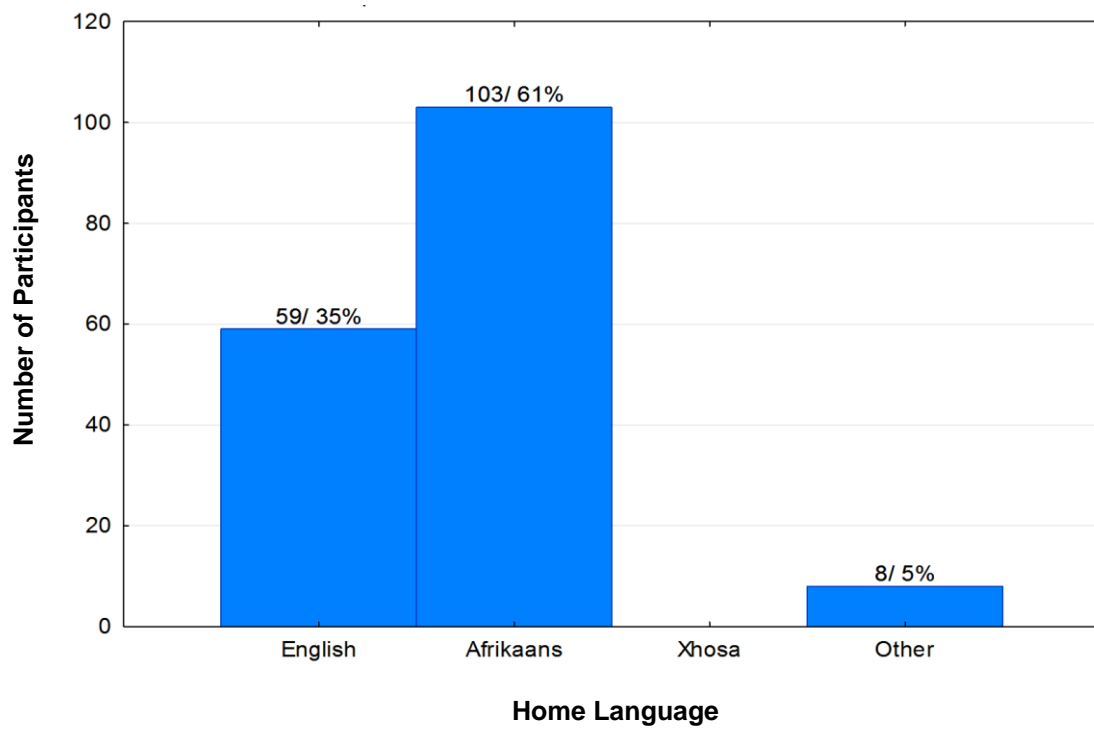


Figure 4.3: Home language (n = 185)

4.2.4 Marital Status

Figure 4.4 presents the marital status of participants in this survey.

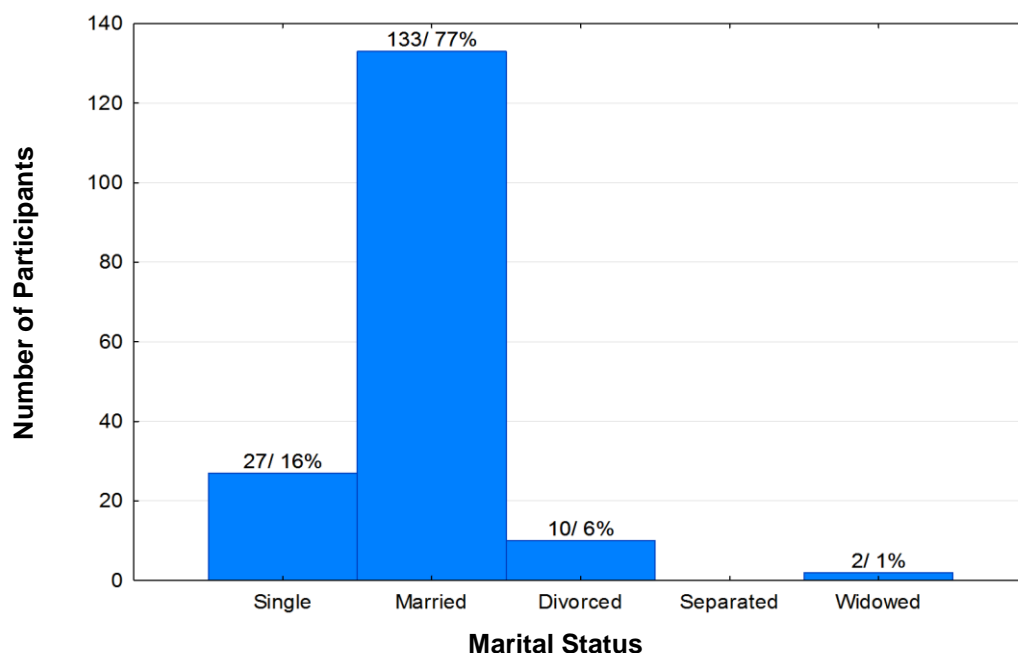


Figure 4.4: Marital status (n = 185)

The majority (77%) of participants in this survey are married, with the remaining 23% being single, divorced or widowed.

4.2.5 Highest Qualification

Figure 4.5 presents the highest levels of qualification of participants in this survey. The majority (40%) of individuals in this sample had a formal qualification in the form of either a degree or honours/Master's qualification. The highest represented level of qualification (27%) in this sample is at the diploma level, with the second highest (23%) being at Grade 12. The sample could thus be regarded as well qualified.

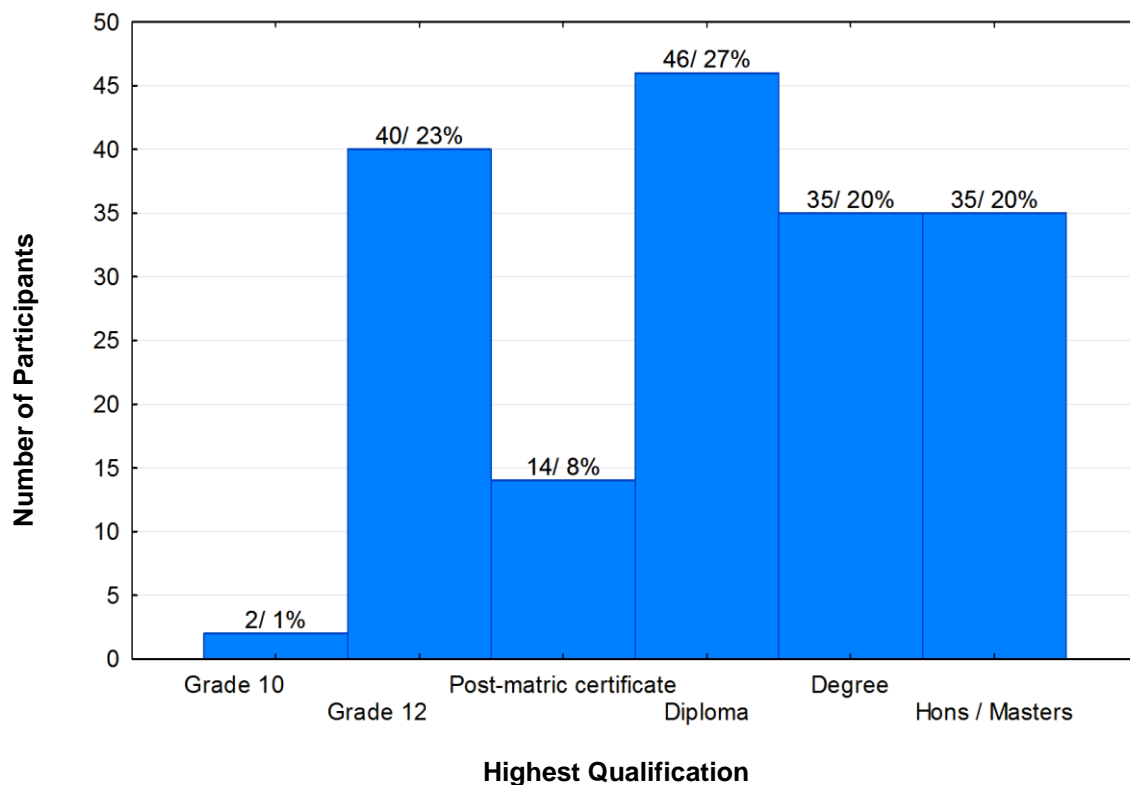


Figure 4.5: Highest qualification (n = 185)

4.2.6 Race

Figure 4.6 presents the racial distribution of participants in this survey.

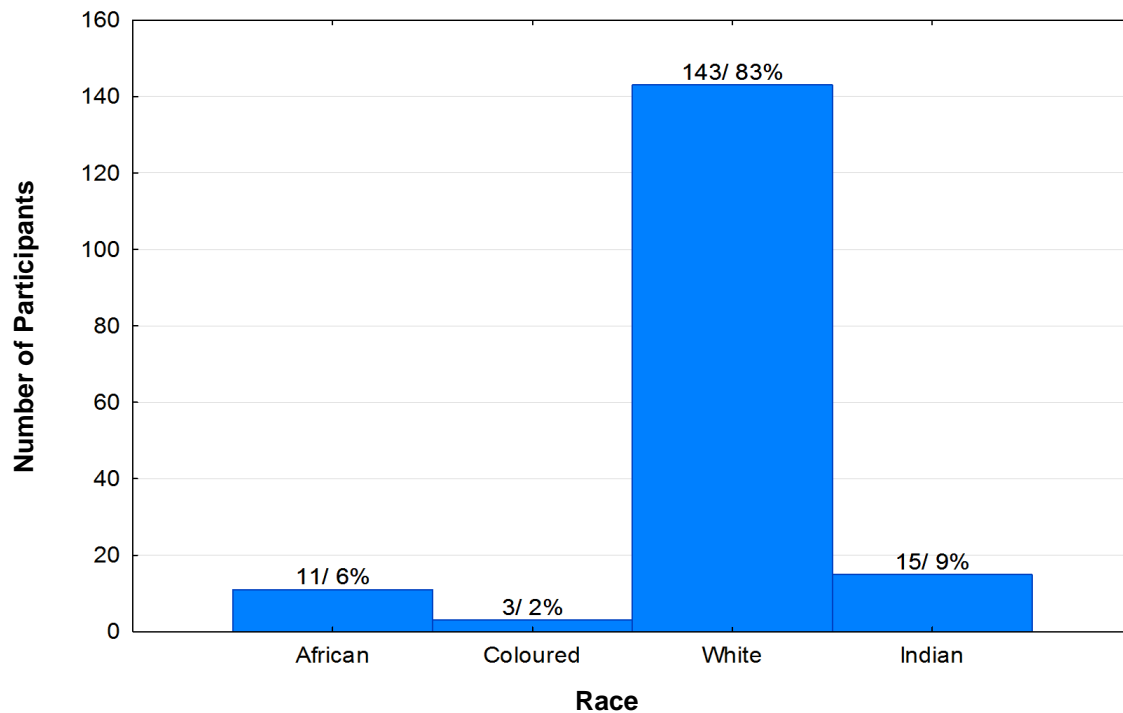


Figure 4.6: Race (n = 185)

It would seem that the sample gives an indication of a predominantly white representation at management level, with 83% of participants having indicated that they belong to this race group. `

4.2.7 Paterson Job Grade

Figure 4.7 presents the job grade distribution of participants in this survey.

Most participants (47%) in this survey seem to fall within the D1-D3 band, and the second most represent the C3-C5 band on the Paterson Job Grading system.

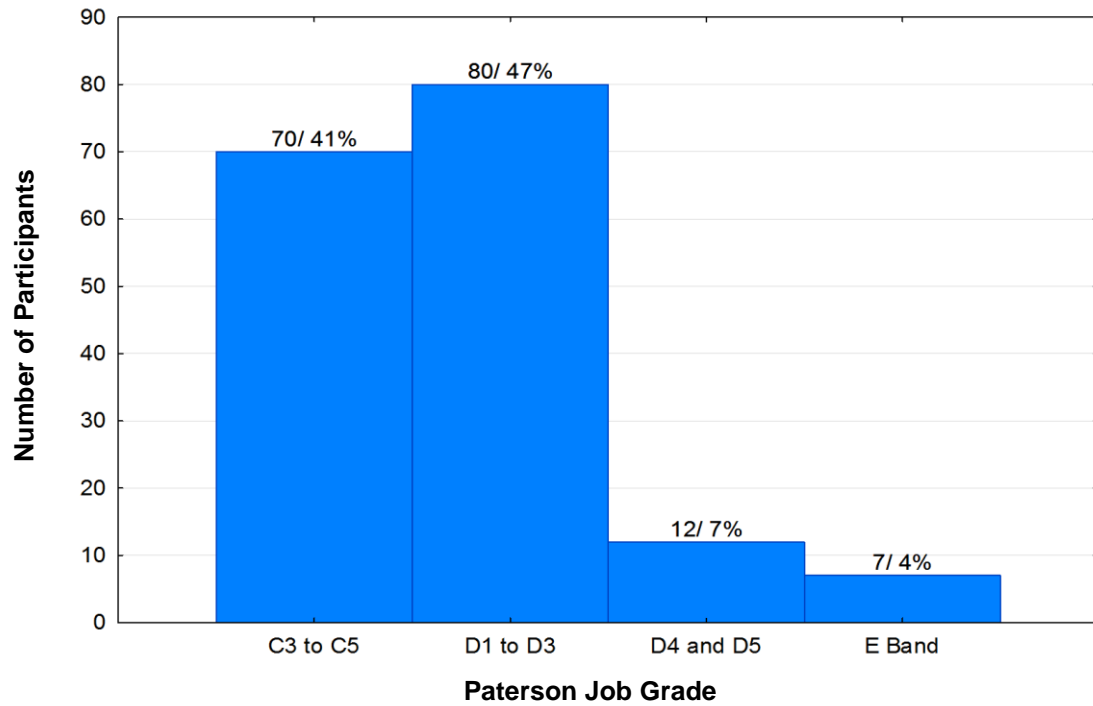


Figure 4.7: Paterson Job Grade (n = 185)

4.2.8 Gender

Figure 4.8 presents the gender distribution of participants in this survey.

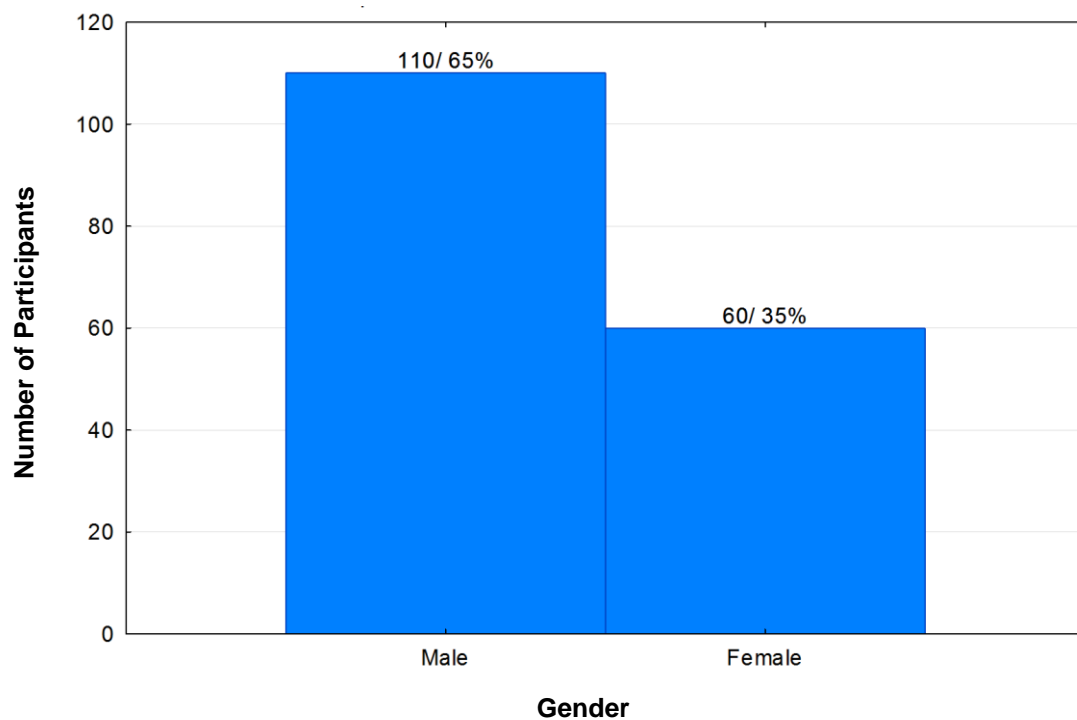


Figure 4.8: Gender (n = 185)

The predominant (65%) number of participants in this survey were men, with the remaining portion (35%) of the sample being women.

4.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MEASUREMENT SCALES

Before it is possible to determine relationships between specific constructs or variables, it is necessary to ensure the necessary confidence that the instruments used indeed reflect the variables they have been tasked to reflect within this study. For this purpose, the internal consistency reliability of the items within each instrument was calculated to determine the extent to which the items in each scale measure the same underlying attribute. Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients were calculated to provide an indication of the inter-item correlations within each given scale. Cronbach's alpha values range between 0 to 1, where values close to one indicate high reliability of the scale, and values close to 0 indicate low reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The implications of performing these calculations are that they enable one to identify and eliminate items that do not contribute to the internally consistent descriptions of scales or subscales, thereby improving the internal consistency reliability of the test (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). Where there are significant increases in (α) coefficient values when items are deleted, overall scale reliabilities can be flagged and monitored for possible revision through this process.

Reliability analysis was conducted on each scale within this survey, namely WWES, MLQ-5X, TIS and JDS. The results indicated no problem with any of the scale reliabilities.

4.3.1 The Wright Work Engagement Scale

The results of the internal reliability analysis of the 12 items of Alarcon's (2009) employee engagement scale are reflected in Table 4.1.

The Cronbach's alpha for the WWES scale was 0.79. As this is above the recommended value of 0.7 (Pallant, 2007), it is satisfactory. Of interest to note is the

low value (0.06) of the item total correlation of item B7 (I feel absorbed while working). This flags the possibility that this item may not be well correlated to the rest of the items in this scale. As there is not a significant increase in the alpha value of the scale when this item is deleted, it was deemed unnecessary to delete it for the purpose of this study.

Table 4.1 Cronbach's Alpha for the WWES

Variable	Average item total correlations
Section B1 (reversed)	0.51
Section B2 (reversed)	0.56
Section B3	0.28
Section B4	0.51
Section B5	0.60
Section B6 (reversed)	0.33
Section B7	0.06
Section B8 (reversed)	0.48
Section B9	0.44
Section B10	0.71
Section B11	0.54
Section B12	0.30

4.3.2 The Transformational Leadership Scale

The results of the internal reliability analysis of all items in each of the four transformational leadership dimensions are reflected in the table below.

Table 4.2 Cronbach's Alpha and average inter-item correlations for the subscales of the MLQ-5X

Variable	Cronbach's α coefficient
Idealised Influence	0.92
Section C1	0.78
Section C3	0.64
Section C6	0.84
Section C8	0.78
Section C10	0.79
Section C12	0.73
Section C13	0.69
Section C19	0.77
Intellectual Stimulation	0.87
Section C2	0.65
Section C4	0.76
Section C16	0.77
Section C18	0.73
Inspirational Motivation	0.90
Section C5	0.72
Section C7	0.82
Section C14	0.83
Section C20	0.73
Individualised Consideration	0.88
Section C9	0.74
Section C11	0.70
Section C15	0.77
Section C17	0.80

The Cronbach's alphas of each of the subscales [idealised influence (0.92), intellectual stimulation (0.87), inspirational motivation (0.90), individualised consideration (0.88)] of the transformational leadership scale had satisfactory reliabilities ($\alpha > 0.7$). All items were found to contribute satisfactorily to the homogeneity of the respective subscales they belong to. The overall reliability of the MLQ-X5 was 0.94, which is well above the recommended value of 0.7 (Pallant, 2007).

4.3.3 The Intention to Quit Scale

The reliability results of the five-item intention to quit scale are reflected in Table 4.3. The Intention to Quit Scale (TIS) showed a high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.92$). Item D5 (If another organisation offered me a job right now, I would leave the company even if the salary were to be equal to my current salary) is flagged for the effect it has on lowering the homogeneity of the overall scale. However, if deleted, the change in alpha value was not regarded to be significant enough to deem the item worthy of deletion for the purpose of this study.

Table 4.3 Cronbach's Alpha for the TIS

Variable	Average inter-item correlations
Section D1	0.82
Section D2	0.82
Section D3	0.84
Section D4	0.82
Section D5	0.66

4.3.4. The Job Diagnostic Survey Scale

The internal reliability analysis was calculated for each of the subscales in the job diagnostics scale. The Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) showed an internal consistency reliability of 0.86, which is well above the recommended 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The item total correlations for all items in each of the subscales indicated a statistically sound internal consistency, except for one item: Section E, part 1-3 in the skill variety subscale (How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents?). The deletion of this item shows a noteworthy increase in the alpha coefficient of the total scale (from 0.81 to 0.91). As the overall reliability of the scale is already relatively high, at 0.81, it is argued for the purpose of this study that

the increase in predictive validity for the purpose of this scale is not of such significance that it would make a difference to the outcomes of the study if the item was deleted. However, the seemingly low correlation with the rest of the items in this subscale is noteworthy to flag for possible deletion in future research, where more complex statistical analyses such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) may be applied. Details of the results for the reliability analysis for each of the subscales are outlined in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Cronbach's Alpha and average inter-item correlations for the subscales of the JDS

Variable	Average inter-item correlations
Autonomy	0.80
Section E par 1-1	0.56
Section E par 2-6	0.66
Section E par 2-9	0.72
Task Identity	0.78
Section E par 1-2	0.56
Section E par 2-2	0.66
Section E par 2-7	0.67
Skill Variety	0.81
Section E par 1-3	0.49
Section E par 2-1	0.77
Section E par 2-4	0.75
Task Significance	0.80
Section E par 1-4	0.62
Section E par 2-5	0.65
Section E par 2-10	0.68
Feedback	0.80
Section E par 1-5	0.66
Section E par 2-3	0.62
Section E par 2-8	0.65
Internal Work Motivation	0.73
Section E par 3-1	0.48
Section E par 3-3	0.62
Section E par 3-5	0.59
Section E par 3-7	0.36
Section E par 5-1	0.41
Section E par 5-4	0.47
General Job Satisfaction	0.79
Section E par 3-2	0.59
Section E par 3-4	0.59
Section E par 3-6	0.60

Section E par 5-2	0.61
Section E par 5-3	0.54
Growth Satisfaction	0.89
Section E par 4-1	0.74
Section E par 4-2	0.80
Section E par 4-3	0.74
Section E par 4-4	0.77
Motivating Potential	0.86
Autonomy	0.65
Task Identity	0.68
Skill Variety	0.68
Task Significance	0.70
Feedback	0.72
Autonomy	0.65
Personal Outcomes	0.82
Internal Work Motivation	0.68
General Job Satisfaction	0.74
Growth Satisfaction	0.72

4.4 RESULTS OF THE CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Specific relationships were hypothesised between the variable constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit on the basis of the findings of the literature study. These relationships are presented schematically in Chapter 2 (refer to Figure 2.3)

Pearson correlation coefficients were used to test the hypothesised relationships between the respective variables in this study. The Spearman correlation coefficients (a non-parametric alternative) were used to confirm these findings due to sample size and the fact that it does not make the assumption of normality. Values closer to +1 are indicative of a strong positive correlation and values closer to -1 are indicative of a strong negative correlation (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The results of the analysis that tested the respective hypotheses are outlined below.

4.4.1 Testing the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement

The results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement are presented in Figure 4.9. It was found that there is a positive correlation between these two variables ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$).

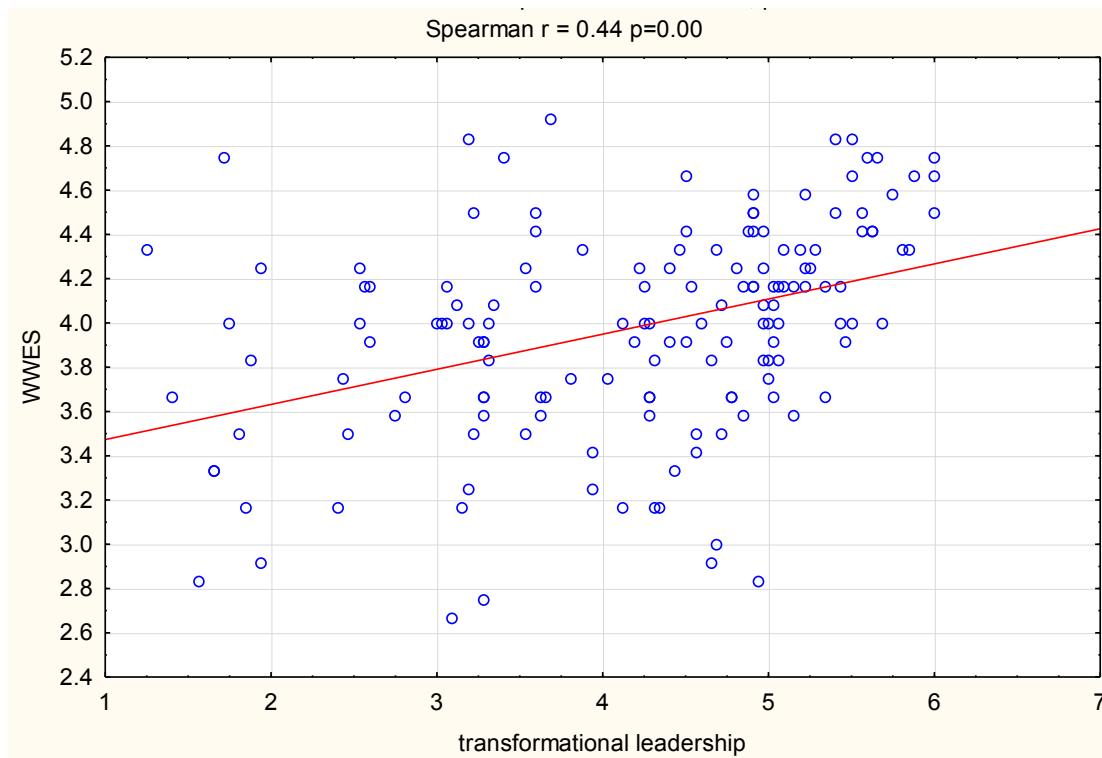


Figure 4.9: The scatterplot indication of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement

4.4.2 Testing the relationship between Employee Engagement and Intention to Quit

Figure 4.10 presents the results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit. It was found that there is a negative correlation between these two variables ($r = -0.53$, $p < 0.01$).

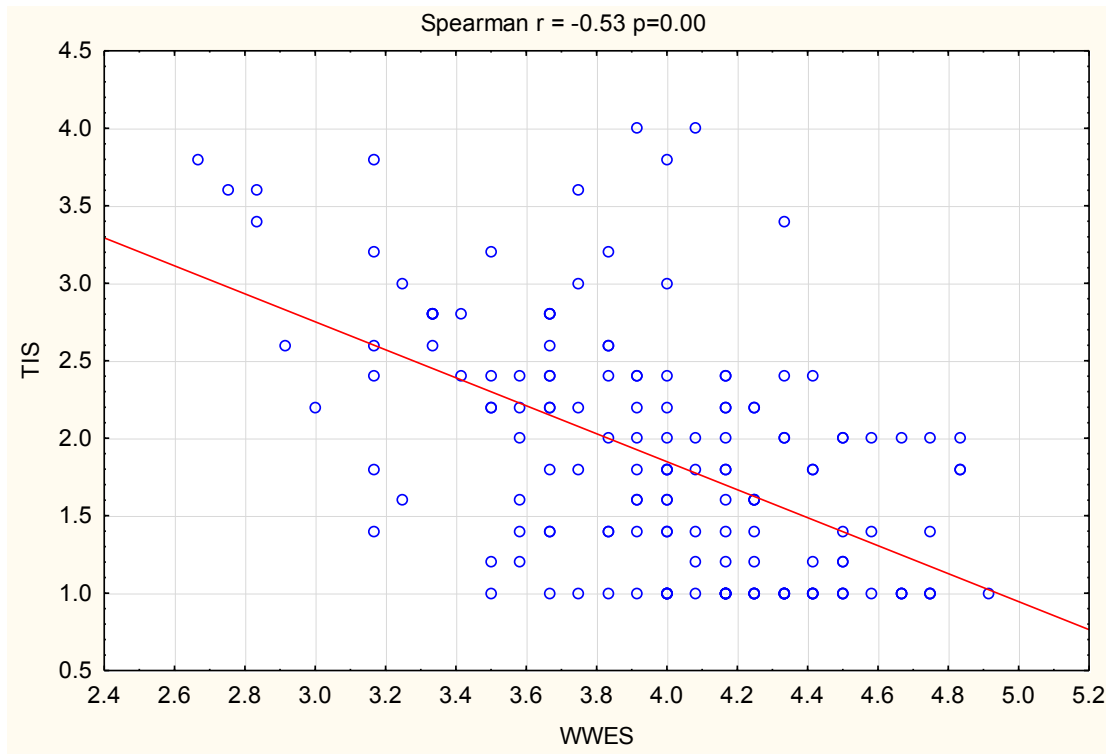


Figure 4.10: The scatterplot indication of the relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit

4.4.3 Testing the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Intention to Quit

The results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit are presented in Figure 4.11. The results indicate a negative relationship between these two variables ($r = -0.47$, $p < 0.01$).

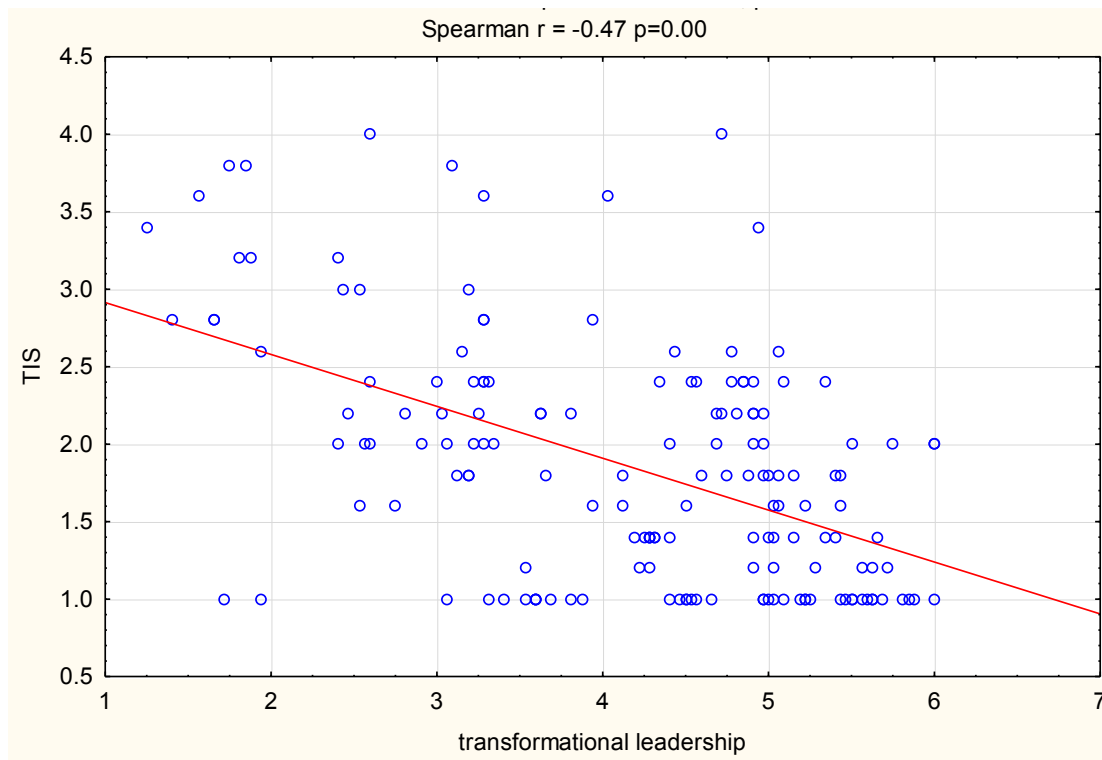


Figure 4.11: The scatterplot indication of the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit

4.4.4 Testing the Relationship Between Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

The results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit are presented in Figure 4.12. These results indicate a negative correlation ($r = -0.44$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that the prevalence of high motivating potential in the construct of jobs has a negative effect on intention to quit.

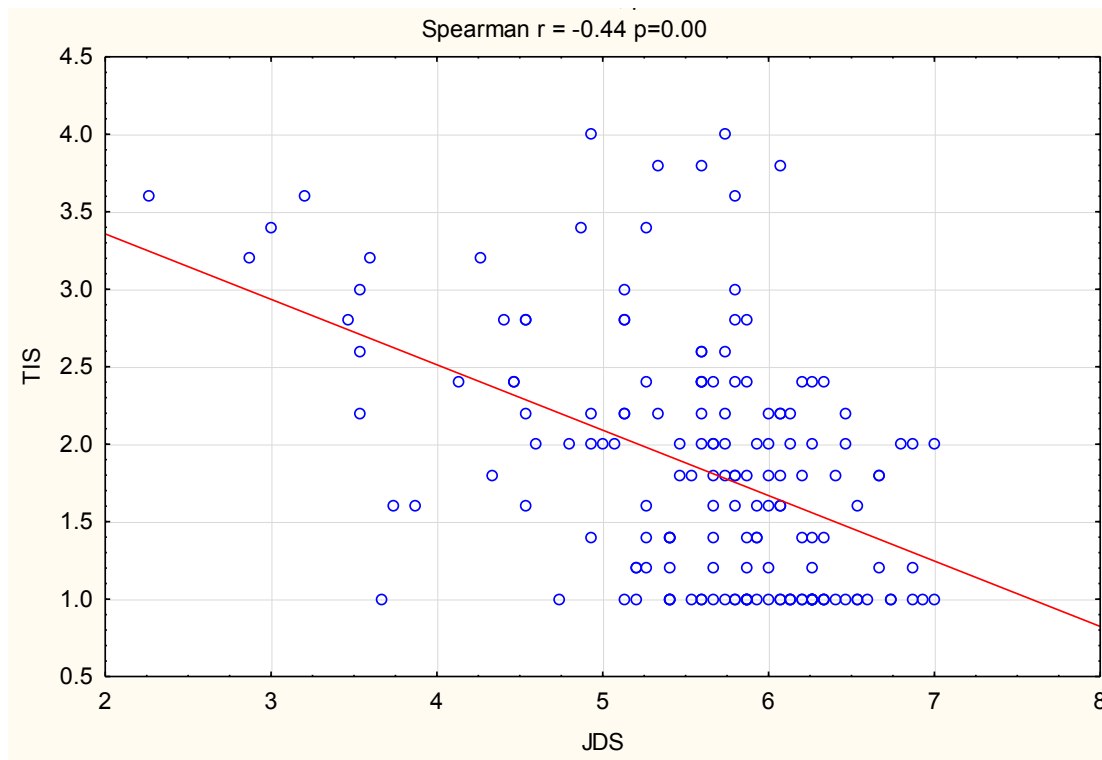


Figure 4.12: The scatterplot indication of the relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit

4.4.5 Testing the relationship between Job Characteristics and Transformational Leadership

The results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between job characteristics and transformational leadership are presented in Figure 4.13. These results indicate a positive correlation ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that the prevalence of transformational leadership has a positive effect on the motivating potential of jobs (job characteristics).

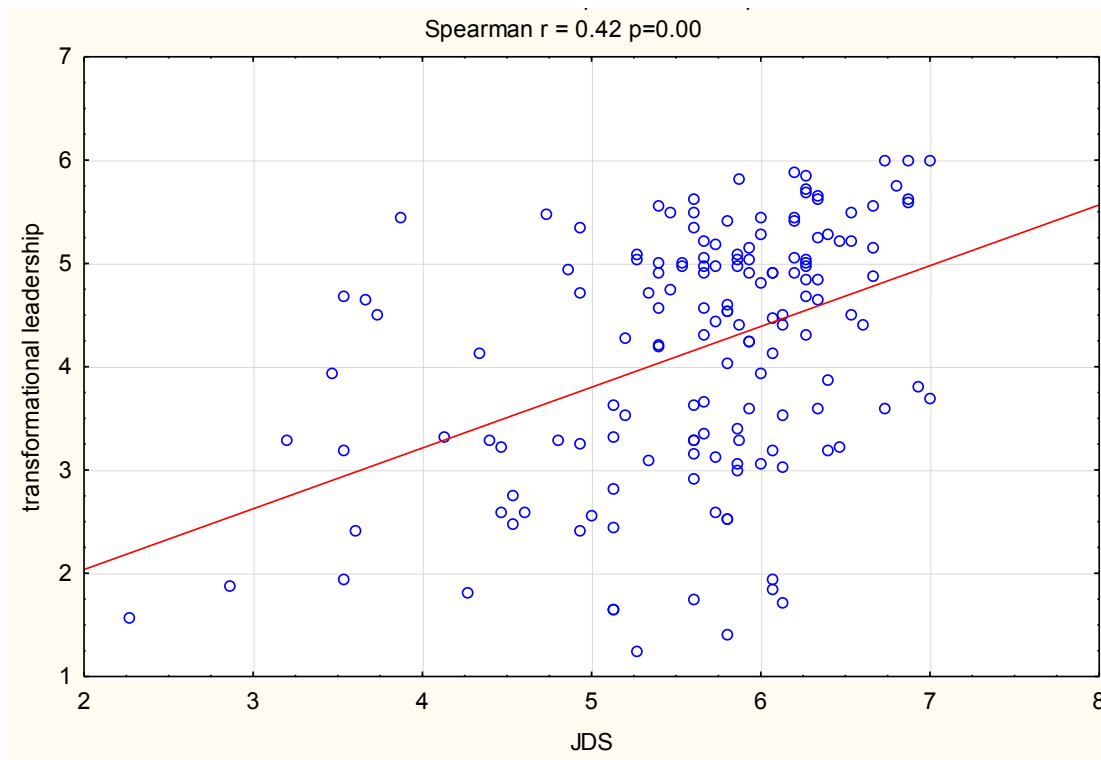


Figure 4.13: The scatterplot indication of the relationship between job characteristics and transformational leadership

4.4.6 Testing the relationship between Job Characteristics and Employee Engagement

The results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between job characteristics and employee engagement are presented in Figure 4.14.

These results indicate a positive correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that the prevalence of high motivating potential in the construct of jobs has a positive effect on employee engagement.

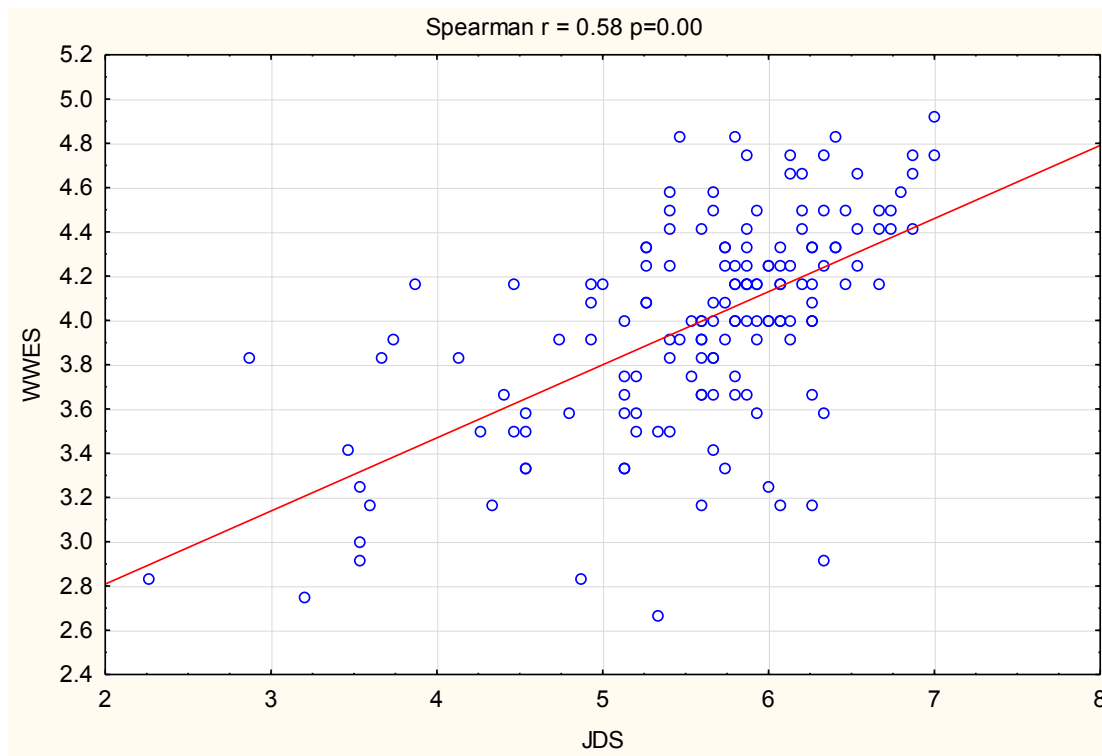


Figure 4.14: The scatterplot indication of the relationship between job characteristics and employee engagement

4.5 RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to empirically explore the strength and direction of relationships between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. This was done to explicate the impact of these relationships on turnover behaviour and engagement within organisations, with the intention to inform human resources practices within an organisation, particularly those related to the company's leadership and employee engagement initiatives.

The hypotheses for this study were derived from the interrelated relationships found in and among the respective and shared variables that load onto these respective constructs, which gave rise to the notion that there is a relationship between them.

This section outlines the results from the Partial Least Squares (PLS) (Vinzi, et. al., 2010) statistical technique which was applied to determine the fundamental relations and covariance structures between the variables transformational leadership,

employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. This is another non-parametric technique that not only confirms the aforementioned correlation analysis, but particularly determines the significance of the path coefficients between these variables.

4.5.1 Testing the Covariance Structures Between Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

The results of the PLS analysis used to determine the fundamental relations and covariance structures between the variables job characteristics, transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 The PLS Model of the Relationship Between Job Characteristics, Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement and Intention to Quit

Path	Path coefficient	Bootstrap mean	95% lower	95% upper	
Employee engagement - > Intention to quit	-0.34	-0.33	-0.52	-0.15	Significant
Job characteristics - > Employee engagement	0.54	0.54	0.39	0.68	Significant
Job characteristics - > Intention to quit	-0.09	-0.09	-0.27	0.08	not significant
Transformational leadership - > Employee engagement	0.20	0.20	0.04	0.36	Significant
Transformational leadership - > Intention to quit	-0.35	-0.35	-0.51	-0.17	Significant
Transformational leadership - > Job characteristics	0.41	0.42	0.26	0.56	Significant

The path coefficients presented in these results indicate an interesting dynamic between the variables in the covariance structure of transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. It would seem that the motivating potential of a job has a significant impact on the prevalence of

employee engagement (path coefficient = +0.54), but that it has no significance in terms of the prevalence of employee intentions to quit (path coefficient = -0.09). However, the prevalence of transformational leadership does seem to have a significant impact on the motivational potential of a job (path coefficient = +0.41) and employee intention to quit (path coefficient = -0.35).

These results are presented schematically in the PLS Model in Figure 4.15.

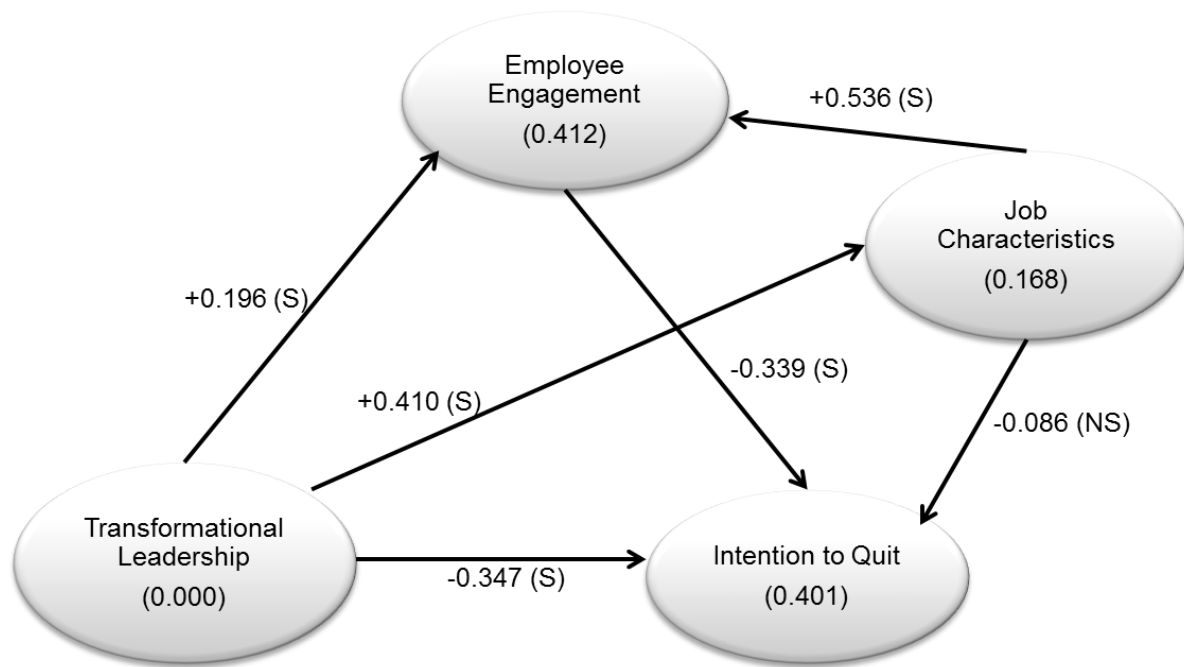


Figure 4.15: The PLS Model for the relationship between job characteristics, transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit

4.5.2 Testing the Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement Between Transformational Leadership and Intention to Quit

The Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) was performed to test if employee engagement acted as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership, as the independent variable, and intention to quit as the dependent variable. The results of this test are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 The Bootstrap Confidence Intervals for Employee Engagement as a Mediator Between Transformational Leadership and Intention to Quit

	p -value	Bootstrap 95% CI Lower	Bootstrap 95% CI upper
Independent variable = transformational leadership, mediator = employee engagement, dependent variable = intention to quit	p < 0.01	-0.16	-0.05

4.5.3 Testing the Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement Between Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

The Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) was performed to test if employee engagement acted as a mediator in the relationship between the job characteristics construct as the independent variable, and intention to quit as the dependent variable. The results of this test are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 The Bootstrap Confidence Intervals for Employee Engagement as a Mediator Between Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

	p-value	Bootstrap 95% CI lower	Bootstrap 95% CI upper
Independent variable = job characteristics, mediator = employee engagement, dependent variable = intention to quit	P<0.01	-0.38	-0.14

In conclusion, the results indicate the following:

- It would seem that the motivating potential of a job has a significant relationship with employee engagement (path coefficient = +0.536).

- The data also indicates a significant relationship between transformational leadership and the motivating potential of a job (path coefficient = +0.410).
- The data indicates significant relationships between employee engagement and transformational leadership (path coefficient = +0.196), employee engagement and intention to quit (path coefficient = -0.339), as well as transformational leadership and intention to quit (path coefficient = -0.347).
- The data also indicates that employee engagement acts as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit ($p < 0.05$; $-0.16 < 0 > -0.05$).
- It is evident from the data, however, that contrary to what the literature review indicated, there is an insignificant relationship between the motivating potential of a job and intention to quit (path coefficient = -0.086). As employee turnover is a very clear outcome of the job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), the insignificance of this path coefficient is surprising. However, this is expected in the light of the aforementioned results of the Sobel test, which indicate that employee engagement is a mediator in the relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the reliability analysis performed on the properties of the psychometric tools, as well as the results of the statistical analysis of the data. The results were presented in terms of how they corroborated the hypotheses relating to the relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit. Further results were presented in terms of how they corroborated the hypotheses relating to the inclusion of the job characteristics variable in the primary covariance structure.

Satisfactory internal reliabilities for the purpose of this study were obtained for all scales of measurement. However, some items were flagged for future research purposes for the seemingly low correlations they showed when compared to the rest of the items in their respective scales. These items include item B7 (I feel absorbed

while working) in the Wright Work Engagement Scale; item D5 (If another organisation offered me a job right now, I would leave the company even if the salary were to be equal to my current salary) in the Intention to Quit scale; and item E 1-3 (How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents?) in the Job Diagnostics scale.

In the following chapter the research results are interpreted and discussed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research results presented in chapter four are interpreted and discussed.

Firstly, this chapter will discuss the outcomes of the reliability analysis that was done on the measurement scales using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Secondly, the chapter will discuss the outcomes of the univariate relationships between the measured ordinal variables, for which Spearman correlations were used. Included in this discussion will be the outcomes of the mediating effects of the employee engagement scale as measured by Sobel's test. Finally, the outcomes of the path analyses using Partial Least Squares (PLS) will be discussed.

5.2 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASUREMENT SCALES

The reliability analysis presented satisfactory Cronbach's alpha values ($\alpha > 0.7$) for all the scales of measurement used in this study. However, certain items were flagged for the seemingly low internal consistency showed when compared to the rest of the items in their respective scales. These items include item B7 (I feel absorbed while working) in the Wright Work Engagement Scale; item D5 (If another organisation offered me a job right now, I would leave the company even if the salary were to be equal to my current salary) in the Intention to Quit scale; and item E 1-3 (How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents?) in the Job Diagnostics scale. The length of subscales, item-total correlations as well as only marginal increases in alpha values that would be affected by item removal led to a decision to retain these items for the purpose of this study. They are however flagged for the purpose of future research.

All measures measured what they were intended to measure with satisfactory reliability for the intentions of this study.

The theoretical model that was derived from the literature study hypothesises specific relationships between the constructs related to this study (see Figures 2.3). The results of the statistical analyses relating to these tested relationships are discussed in the sections to follow.

5.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Various indications were found in the literature that pointed to the possibility of a relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass and Avolio, 1992; Macey & Schneider, in Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Sacks, 2006; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). The results of this study found a positive correlation between these two constructs ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$). The study therefore corroborated Hypothesis 1, which postulated that there is a positive relationship between the perceived prevalence of the transformational leadership style and employee engagement. Alarcon (2009) found that the engagement construct is a unidimensional construct that is defined by a positive affective and cognitive state characterised by absorption in one's work, feeling energised by one's work and feeling fulfilled through one's work. In light of this definition of engagement, these results then mean that a high occurrence of perceived transformational leadership behaviours in the company's leadership is consistent with high levels of a positive affective and cognitive state characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment in these employees. This could mean that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement, which provides compelling information for consideration in leadership recruitment practices and the structure of leadership development initiatives. This may also provide compelling evidence in support of the notion that employees disengage as a result of their managers (Buckingham & Coffman, 2005). To confirm this notion, however, the strength of the causal

relationship between these two constructs would need to be determined in future research.

5.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIT

Various authors have alluded to a possible relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit, either directly or by virtue of interrelationships among the antecedents of both these constructs (Boshoff et al., 2002; Elangoven, 2001; Sacks, 2006; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). Consistent with this notion, the results of this study found a negative relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit ($r = -0.53$, $p < 0.01$). The results therefore corroborated Hypothesis 2, which postulated that there is a negative relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit. This finding implies that high levels of a positive affective and cognitive state characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment in this sample are associated with low levels of intention to quit among these employees in the company. This provides important insights for the development of talent retention strategies and employee engagement strategies in the company, in terms of the value they could add to desired organisational outcomes such as low turnover and optimal productivity, as per the findings of Buckingham and Coffman's (2005) research, which made the link between engagement and business unit performance. These findings are especially consistent with the research findings of Sacks (2006), which made the link between engagement and the outcome of intention to quit.

It therefore would seem that the extent to which the company could ensure that an employee's work is structured in such a way that he/she feels fully and positively absorbed by it, energised and fulfilled, would lower the intentions of such an individual to ultimately quit. As intention to quit is a direct antecedent of turnover behaviour (Elangoven, 2001), this leaves two concerns for the company in the light of the engagement factor. The first concern is for those individuals who have quit and ultimately crystallised this intention by actually leaving the organisation. This would have a direct impact on the organisational outcome of turnover behaviour. The

second concern is for those individuals who have quit but not yet crystallised the intention to quit by actually leaving the organisation. Such individuals would then be in a current state of disengagement, which would have a direct impact on the productivity with which they execute their work. This, in turn, ultimately would have an indirect impact on the bottom line outcomes of the organisation.

5.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INTENTION TO QUIT

Numerous relationships have been found in the literature between respective transformational leadership behaviours and antecedents of intention to quit, specifically commitment, satisfaction, perceived support, organisational citizenship behaviour, person-organisation fit and work-role variables (Alam & Mohammad, 2009; Bergh & Theron, 1999; Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Mester et al., 2003, Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Somers, 1995). This led to the notion that there may be a direct relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. Based on this notion, Hypothesis 3 postulated a negative relationship between the perceived presence of the transformational leadership style and the prevalence of intention to quit among employees. The research findings for this study confirmed a significantly negative relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit ($r = -0.47$, $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 3 was therefore confirmed by the research findings. The inference that can be drawn from these findings is that the cultivation of transformational leadership behaviours within the leadership practices of the company will likely coincide with a decline in the intentions to quit among employees.

These findings provide interesting support for the notion expressed by Marcus Buckingham, namely that employees leave their managers and not their organisations (Buckingham & Coffman, 2005). To fully support such a statement, however, would require the extrapolation of all those factors that lead to actual turnover behaviour and to determine the impact of leadership behaviour on them. This would make a noteworthy topic for future research.

5.6 THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INTENTION TO QUIT

The literature review suggested a largely indirect relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit, as affected by variables such as respectable supervisors, interpersonal relationships, satisfaction, commitment, challenging work, meaningful work, autonomy, independence, participation in decision making, empowerment, feedback, and competitive remuneration; all of which were shared in some respects by the respective components of each construct. The fact that some of these variables were also shared in their presence as antecedents of the construct employee engagement, and some presented themselves as moderating variables in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit, led to the investigation of the mediating effect of the employee engagement construct in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. Hypothesis 4 held that employee engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. The results of this study found that employee engagement acts as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit ($p < 0.05$; $-0.16 < 0 > -0.05$). These findings therefore corroborated of Hypothesis 4 which elucidated the relationships between these three constructs.

The partial least squares (PLS) model, which indicates fundamental relations and covariance structures between these variables, indicated significant relationships between all three constructs. This means that, while transformational leadership has its own unique relationship with intention to quit, the presence of the employee engagement factor seems to mediate this relationship. While transformational leadership therefore may have its own positive effect on intentions to quit, the extent to which employees experience a positive affective and cognitive state characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment as a direct result of transformational leadership may affect the extent to which transformational leadership behaviours affect intentions to quit among employees. This means that the focus of human resources initiatives aimed at reducing turnover by reducing intentions to quit should be on leadership behaviour, as well as on employee engagement initiatives and the implementation thereof in order to mitigate the outcome of intentions to quit.

The literature review revealed an interesting pattern of variables that were most commonly shared between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit, in that they were related mostly to different job characteristic variables such as enjoyable work, responsibility, achievement, challenging and meaningful work, autonomy and independence, participation in decision making, empowerment, feedback, and more. This denoted the inclusion of the job characteristics model in the empirical design to explicate the impact of this construct in the relationship between the other three constructs, with the aim to illuminate more specifically how human resources practices could be applied to optimise engagement and mitigate intentions to quit for optimal organisational outcomes. The next section provides a discussion of the results of this investigation.

5.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND INTENTION TO QUIT

There is clear indication of a possible direct relationship between the construct intention to quit and the job characteristics factor (Houkes et al., 2003; Rusconi, 2005) in the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study. Hackman and Oldham (1974) specifically note that individuals who do not value personal growth may experience a job with high motivating potential as being anxiety provoking, which may cause them to leave. It is then argued that the inverse would also be true, in that those who do value personal growth will find a job of low motivating potential unsatisfying and, as a result, would also ultimately leave the organisation. While this clearly highlights the influence in this relationship of other moderating variables, which are not included in the primary constructs being investigated for the purpose of this study, the job characteristics model specifically denotes the influence of specific characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) on critical psychological states (experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work and knowledge of the actual results of the work activities). These latter states ultimately will have an impact on turnover behaviour, among other personal and work-related outcomes (Rusconi, 2005). As intention to quit is a direct antecedent of turnover behaviour (Elangoven, 2001), this

gave rise to Hypothesis 5, which denoted that there is a negative relationship between the perceived motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and the prevalence of intention to quit among employees. The results of the statistical analysis corroborated ($r = -0.44$, $p < 0.01$) this hypothesis, meaning that there indeed is a direct relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit, as an increase in the perceived motivating potential of a job, as measured by participant opinions about specific job characteristics, will likely result in a decrease in intentions to quit among employees in this sample.

These findings are consistent with the aforementioned literature on the job characteristics model, which denotes turnover behaviour as an organisational outcome affected by the motivating potential of a job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; Rusconi, 2005) in the light of the finding that intention to quit is a direct antecedent of turnover behaviour (Elangoven, 2001). The inferences that could be drawn by the organisation on the basis of these findings are that the motivating potential of the work of their employees, as influenced by specific job characteristics such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, which have a direct impact on the critical psychological states of experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work and knowledge of the results of the work activities, may, among other organisational outcomes, have a negative impact on intention to quit as a direct antecedent of turnover behaviour. Of importance to note here are the moderating variables that may have an impact on this relationship, such as Hackman and Oldham's (1974) indication that an individual's growth need has an impact on his/her experienced motivation. The extent to which jobs are structured to provide meaningful experiences for individuals is therefore an important consideration that the company would need to integrate into its retention strategies. This will have to be done as deeply as at the individual level within the organisation if it were to mitigate intentions to quit among employees.

5.8 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB CHARACTERISTICS

While there was no direct indication of a relationship between transformational leadership and job characteristics in the literature investigated within the context of this study, there were definite indications of the possibility of such a relationship through the relationships found between the shared variables of all three constructs and the respective transformational leadership practices. Challenging the process (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) and intellectual stimulation (Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Horwitz et al., 2008; Mester et al., 2003; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006) concerned with providing meaningful and challenging work that requires a challenge of the status quo, taking initiative and encouraging innovation, and individual stretch and growth could be argued to be related to the job characteristics model by way of meaningfulness. Enabling others to act, encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) and individual consideration (Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Horwitz et al., 2008; Mester et al., 2003; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006) are primarily concerned with development, acknowledging performance and encouraging and celebrating achievement and success, which could be argued to relate to the job characteristics model through experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work and, more specifically, the core job dimension of feedback (performance, achievement and recognition related).

On the basis of the above, Hypothesis 6 denoted a positive relationship between the perceived presence of the transformational leadership style and the motivating potential of a job (job characteristics). This hypothesis was corroborated by the results, indicating that there is a direct ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and positive relationship between transformational leadership and the motivating potential of a job (job characteristics). This means that an increase in the perceived presence of transformational leadership behaviours within the company coincides with an increase in the perceived motivating potential of jobs. This is not surprising, considering the fact that the job characteristics model is grounded in the purpose for job enrichment, involving the apportionment of activities, tasks and responsibilities to staff members in such a way that it maximises potential and meets organisational goals (Öztürk, Bahcecik & Baumann, 2006) – an outcome also of the

transformational leadership style. As highlighted in Chapter 2, transformational leadership is concerned primarily with creating an innate connection with followers, during which they develop a heightened awareness of transcendent collective interests that the leader channels toward greater organisational success and extraordinary goal achievement (Antonakis et al., 2003; Northouse, 2007). It would seem by virtue of this relationship presented in the results that the important implications for the adopted leadership practices and development of retention strategies within the organisation, lie in the transformational leadership behaviours that lend themselves to structuring work for optimal motivation and enrichment.

5.9 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

On the basis of the literature view, it seemed that the construct employee engagement has a very direct relationship with the job characteristics factor (Houkes et al., 2003; Sacks, 2006).

While the literature review presents three aspects of engagement, namely trait, state, and behavioural engagement (Shuck & Wollard, 2010), work engagement (state engagement) was the focus of this study, because trait and behavioural engagement are argued not to capture the construct of engagement theoretically and because behavioural engagement is difficult to measure (Alarcon, 2009). The Wright Work Engagement Scale (WWES) was created specifically to measure the state of work engagement, with the emphasis on both the affective and cognitive aspects of engagement, which is something that previous scales did not emphasise (Alarcon, 2009). As such, it was anticipated that a very direct relationship would be found between the motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and intention to quit in this research. This was represented by Hypothesis 7, which denoted a positive relationship between job characteristics and employee engagement. This hypothesis was corroborated by the research findings of this study ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), therefore meaning that an increase in the motivating potential of a job coincides with an increase in the extent to which employees in this sample experience a positive affective and cognitive state as characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment.

Specific attention to the construct of work, with specific reference to skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, therefore could have an influence on the extent of work engagement experienced by the employees of the company. This means that job enrichment as achieved through specific job characteristic factors (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback), which contribute to the critical psychological states of employees (experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work, knowledge of the results of work activities), may be an important factor to consider in the practices that the company employs to achieve employee engagement for optimal business unit outcomes and, ultimately, optimal bottom line results.

These findings provide reason to believe that the company should therefore not only focus its attention on the opportunities presented by the dynamics affected by the transformational leadership construct in their pursuit of optimal organisational outcomes, but also on those presented by the dynamics affected by the employee engagement construct. These results denote the merit in focusing on employee engagement initiatives, and specifically how work is structured to optimally engage employees for the impact this has on the desired outcomes of the business unit (Buckingham & Coffman, 2005). Focusing on employee engagement then may also, by default, have an impact on lowered intentions to quit due to the direct relationship between the engagement construct and intention to quit.

5.10 THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND INTENTION TO QUIT

Research by Sacks (2006) indicated that engagement has a mediating effect in the relationship between its antecedents and job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intentions to quit and organisational behaviour. Hypothesis 8 set out to confirm this mediating effect of the employee engagement construct within the context of this study, by postulating specifically that employee engagement mediates the relationship between the motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) and intention to quit. The results corroborated this hypothesis ($p < 0.05$; $-0.38 < 0 > -0.14$), which means that,

while there is evidence of a direct relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit, employee engagement mediates this relationship. The extent to which an increase in the motivating potential of a job is therefore likely to correlate with a decrease in intentions to quit would be determined by the extent to which engagement is experienced by the employees. It therefore is not only the structure of a job to deliver optimal motivational potential, but the extent to which that motivating potential engages each individual to deliver a positive affective and cognitive state, characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment, that will likely influence their intentions to quit. Again, this brings important implications for the company to consider in the development of engagement and retention strategies, which should be at a level as deep as the individual level within the organisation.

5.11 THE COVARIANCE STRUCTURES BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND INTENTION TO QUIT

The results of the study supported all the hypothesised relationships between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. PLS path analyses were conducted to determine the significance of these relationships. These findings are discussed next.

The significantly positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement (path coefficient = +0.196) confirms that, as the prevalence of the type of behaviours and practices typical of the transformational leadership style among leadership in the organisation increases, the levels of engagement among employees are also likely to increase.

The significantly negative relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit (path coefficient = -0.339) confirms that, as the prevalence of high levels of engagement among employees increases within the organisation, the levels of intention to quit decreases. Heightened levels of a positive affective and cognitive state, as characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment, are therefore associated with lower intentions to quit. Such heightened positive affective and cognitive states

could likely be achieved through the deliberate practice of transformational leadership, considering the high correlation between levels of engagement and this leadership practice found in the results of this study.

The significantly negative relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit (path coefficient = -0.347) strengthens the aforementioned notion, as an increase in the prevalence of the type of behaviours and practices typical of the transformational leadership style among leadership in the organisation is also consistent with a decrease in the levels of intention to quit among employees.

The significantly positive relationship between transformational leadership and the motivating potential of a job (job characteristics) (path coefficient = +0.410) confirms that, as the prevalence of the types of behaviours and practices typical of the transformational leadership style among leadership in the organisation increases, so too does the motivating potential of work (job characteristics). This could mean that the transformational leadership style lends itself to the structuring of work that delivers experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of work and knowledge of the result of work activities, which, in turn, deliver high work motivation, high quality work performance, high satisfaction with work, and low absenteeism and turnover behaviour. However, this would need to be explored empirically in future research to confirm this notion.

The significantly positive relationship between the motivating potential of work and employee engagement (path coefficient = +0.196) confirms that increased levels of motivating potential of work in the organisation are consistent with increased levels of engagement. This could mean that the way work is structured has an impact on the extent of engagement employees derive from their work.

The insignificance (path coefficient = -0.086) of the path between the motivating potential of a job and intention to quit in the relationship between employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit means that employee engagement acts as a mediator in this relationship. This means that the motivating potential of work only has a negative effect on the intention to quit among employees to the extent that the work of the employees actually engages them.

Considering the importance of the construct intention to quit in determining turnover behaviour (Elangoven, 2001), and that of the employee engagement construct on bottom line results (Buckingham & Coffman, 2005), it would seem that the deliberate integration of the transformational leadership behavioural profile into leadership and recruitment practices within the organisation may have a positive influence on mitigating turnover behaviour and improving bottom line productivity.

Transformational leaders sacrifice self-interest for the good of others and have the ability to motivate their followers to transcend their own self-interest for the greater good of the organisation (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1992; Engelbrecht et al., 2004; Macey & Schneider, in Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Sacks, 2006; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). The typical behavioural profile of such leaders would involve behaviours related to idealised influence, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation (Avolio & Bass, 1995).

Behaviours related to idealised influence are deeply centred in an altruistic approach to follower needs, where the leader aligns the altruistic values of their followers with their own, thereby developing deep trust relationships (Engelbrecht et al., 2004). Such trust relationships build commitment to goals, which ultimately results in exceptional performance. It therefore is concerned with the ability to foster strong emotional bonds with followers based on faith, trust, respect and pride.

Behaviours related to individual consideration involve an innate interest in individual needs and the ability to link them to organisational needs, such that opportunity for growth and self-actualisation is enabled in a socially constructive way through specific actions, such as coaching, delegation, support, encouragement, advice, feedback and personal development (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1992; Engelbrecht et al., 2004; Macey & Schneider, in Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Sacks, 2006; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

Those behaviours that relate to the intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership involve challenging follower beliefs and encouraging challenging of the status quo in creative problem solving in a manner that appeals to

follower logic and analysis (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1992; Macey & Schneider, in Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Sacks, 2006; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

Inspirational motivation is concerned with behaviours that involve followers in the accomplishment of organisational goals by way of the provision of meaningful and challenging work, and providing a strong cascaded link between organisational vision and objectives to the individual tasks and responsibilities of an individual (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1992; Macey & Schneider, in Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Sacks, 2006; Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

The influence of the job characteristics construct on the relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit denotes the value of considering the structure of work for optimal motivating potential for the impact it may have on increasing levels of engagement and, ultimately, decreasing the intention to quit via employee engagement. This means that specific focus should be placed on task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback in the structure of work as part of any talent retention, employee engagement or leadership intervention. The aim of this would be to achieve the critical psychological states of experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work and knowledge of the actual results of the work activities and, ultimately, the desired outcomes, among others, low turnover behaviour.

5.12 SUMMARY

In conclusion, in a recessive time, when the war for talent retention is rife, those organisational interventions that are deployed for the purpose of mitigating employee turnover behaviour and improving the bottom line through employee engagement are critical to sustainable organisational success. The results of the current study present the notion that such interventions should focus on the development and reinforcement of transformational leadership behaviours among an organisation's leaders and managers. These interventions should also focus on the structure of work. The study outlined very clearly the influence of transformational leadership on

employee engagement, on the motivating potential of a job and, ultimately, on the intention to quit. It highlighted the role of leadership behaviour in influencing the positive affective states of employees by building trust and commitment, and fostering strong emotional bonds based on faith, trust, respect and pride. It further highlighted the role of leadership in influencing the positive cognitive state of employees through intellectual stimulation by challenging their beliefs, encouraging the challenge of the status quo and creative problem solving. It also highlighted the role of the leader in inspirational motivation, and in structuring work for optimal engagement and motivation. This is achieved by providing challenging and meaningful work with strong cascaded links between organisational vision and objectives and individual tasks, needs and responsibilities and providing clear and direct feedback related to performance, achievement and success. The results further highlighted the notion that, while the structure of work for the motivating potential of a job is important in the greater context of the relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement and intention to quit, specifically for the influence it has on work engagement, focusing on the structure of work alone will have little effect on the intention to quit unless it delivers a positive affective and cognitive state characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment at an individual level. The constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement and the motivating potential of a job therefore have a very important relationship in the mitigation of turnover intentions and, ultimately, turnover behaviour, and in affecting business unit performance in an organisation.

The following chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter acknowledges the limitations of this study. The chapter also provides specific recommendations for future research on the basis of this study. The chapter ends with a general conclusion of the study.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation to take note of relates to the sample that was used for the purpose of this study. As the sample was drawn from a limited level within the organisation, it is not necessarily representative of the entire organisation. The sample was drawn from the management levels within the organisation on specific Paterson grade bands (C3 to C5; D1 to D5; E band). Representation in these bands was relatively consistent from one band to the next. The inferences that could be drawn from the results of this study would be representative primarily of management, however, and not of the remaining employee population within this company. Furthermore, the demographical composition of this sample was not chosen specifically and, as a result, caution should be applied in drawing inferences made from the results based on specific demographical characteristics.

This study was designed to draw understanding from observations in a here-and-now (cross-sectional) time period and not over an extended period (longitudinal). As such, conclusions are based on an analysis of results at a static point in time. Whatever effect any other dynamics present within the organisation at this point in time might have had on the results may therefore not have been picked up in the information presented in the results. This study therefore does not benefit from the advantages presented by longitudinal studies, which may present additional

information that could add to the body of research and further explain the relationship between the constructs used in this study.

The next limitation relates to the measurement scales used. As only the transformational leadership subscale of the MLQ was used for the purpose of this study, the operationalization of the MLQ measurement scale should be considered in terms of the additional information that could have been provided by the inclusion of the non-transformational subscales, and the effects this may have had on the findings. Further to this, the Wright Work Engagement Scale specifically measures the state of work engagement, capturing both the affective and cognitive aspects of engagement, which were not measured by former engagement scales. However, this scale does not measure trait and behavioural engagement on the premise that they do not capture the construct of engagement theoretically, and that behavioural engagement is difficult to measure (Alarcon, 2009). It should be noted, therefore, that only the work component of employee engagement can be accounted for in the inferential interpretation of the results of this study. While it could be argued that the work component is the most important, it does not act in isolation of the emotional and behavioural states, which together are directed towards the desired organisational outcomes that a company aims to achieve (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study hold certain implications for future research with respect to engagement theory, leadership theory, job enrichment theory and intention to quit theory.

Firstly, the theoretical model that was proposed for the purpose of this study has the potential to be expanded through the inclusion of more variables that may influence the relationship between either one or all of the primary constructs within this study. One specific dimension that could be considered in the light of this theoretical model is the impact of the moderating variables on the motivating potential of a job, and how these impact on the dynamics of the relationship of the job characteristics construct with the remaining three constructs in this study.

A second aspect that could be explored further in future research is the variance in the relationships between the constructs in this study. While this study focused on ascertaining whether there are direct relationships between these constructs as speculated in the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study, these relationships could also be explored further to determine the direct effects of these variables on one another. This would further explicate the value of these relationships in the light of organisational interventions deployed for specific organisational outcomes.

While the employee engagement construct was investigated primarily for its mediating effect in the relationships between the constructs explored in this study, the influence of other constructs as mediating variables could also be explored. The mediating effect of the transformational leadership construct should be explored to determine if it is perhaps a mediator in the relationship between employee engagement and the motivating potential of a job. Similarly, it could be explored for the possibility of a mediating effect in the relationship between the motivating potential of a job and employee intentions to quit. The job characteristics construct could also be investigated for its mediating effect in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee intentions to quit. Although employee engagement seemed to be a key mediating variable in the current theoretical model, the stability of this model could be examined in a cross-validation study of a new sample from the same population. This would provide valuable additional research for further explicating the findings of the current study.

Due to the impact that transformational leadership is believed to have on the effective management of change in the South African context, and the indication of a profound connection with employee engagement as derived from the literature reviewed for this research project, this leadership style enjoyed the primary focus in relation to leadership practice for the purpose of this study. It is believed, however, that the impact of other leadership styles, as measured by the MLQ, may provide valuable further insights into the dynamics presented in the relationships between employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. It therefore is recommended that these styles be included in future research relating to these relationships.

While leadership behaviour and job characteristics were the only two constructs considered as independent variables in this study, future research could investigate other variables that may further explain the constructs of employee engagement and intention to quit.

The results of this study indicate that there is a significantly positive relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit. This leaves a question in terms of the circumstances under which the intended (low turnover) as opposed to the unintended outcome (high turnover) would be achieved. Future research should therefore focus on determining to what extent all four aspects of the transformational leadership scale will impact on the intention to quit. The same holds for the five dimensions of the job characteristics scale in the relationship between transformational leadership and the motivating potential of a job, and between the motivating potential of a job and employee engagement. A longitudinal research design is also recommended for possible future research related to these constructs. It is believed that such a research design would provide for the identification of valuable additional information relating to the circumstances under which the intended as opposed to the unintended outcome relating to the dynamics between these constructs would be achieved.

Although apparently difficult to measure (Alarcon, 2009), future research could investigate a way to amend the WWES to include the measurement of the behavioural component of engagement, in which transformational leadership is believed to have an indirect impact on behavioural engagement by virtue of its impact on trust. Further to this, research could even go so far as to include the trait component of engagement as directly measured by job design attributes. This will further elucidate the conceptual model of engagement as presented in Shuck and Wollard (2010), which is based on significant parallels drawn from all the former research on the engagement construct. This would provide valuable facilitation of further empirical research to build on the conceptual model of the employee engagement construct, which is believed to have a very direct impact on bottom line organisational results. It would also provide for the operationalization of an amended

version of the WWES to measure the comprehensive conceptualisation of the entire engagement construct.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Sustaining good performance and optimising current talent for greater business results in today's economic climate holds important implications for organisations and its leaders in light of engagement and leadership practices. Research on the dynamics of the relationships between specific leadership behaviours, employee engagement, work-related factors and employee intention to quit shed valuable light on respective focus areas within these dynamics. This study however set out to explore specific relationships between perceived leader behaviour, employee engagement, job characteristics and employee intention to quit by testing a conceptual model of hypothesised relationships derived from research on the available body of literature relating to these constructs.

A non-experimental quantitative research design was applied using a sample of management personnel in a local JSE-listed manufacturing organisation (n = 185). Participants were asked to voluntarily complete a questionnaire that measured the perceived presence of the transformational leadership style, experienced work engagement, perceived motivating potential of work and employee intention to quit. Reliability analysis was done to assess the measurement properties of the respective measures, and all scales showed adequate reliability. Univariate relationships between the measured ordinal variables, using Spearman correlations, corroborated all hypothesised relationships between the respective constructs.

This study adds to existing literature on intention to quit, transformational leadership, employee engagement and job characteristics (motivating potential of a job) by provided insights into the strength and directions of relationships among these constructs, and the mediating effects of the engagement construct on employee intention to quit. The findings of this study provide valuable information to consider in business practice for the development of interventions aimed at mitigating turnover behaviour and maximising organisational outcomes through an engaged workforce.

The results indicated statistically significant relationships between the constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. A significantly positive relationship was found between transformational leadership and employee engagement which could hold important inferential significance for the influence of the transformational leadership style on improved levels of employee engagement and ultimately, also the bottom line results of an organisation. A significantly positive relationship was also found between the motivating potential of a job and employee engagement, meaning that there is importance in the way that work is structured in terms of how it affects levels of engagement within employees. A significantly positive relationship was found between transformational leadership and the motivating potential of a job which also denotes importance to the presence of the transformational leadership style for work to be structured in such a fashion that it holds optimal motivating potential for employees. The significantly negative relationship found between transformational leadership and intention to quit implies the importance of this leadership style in potentially mitigating turnover behaviour. The significantly negative relationship found between employee engagement and intention to quit brings potential inferential significance in terms of the impact that employee engagement may have on mitigating employee intention to quit and ultimately, also turnover behaviour. The corroboration of the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between transformational leadership and intention to quit as well as between job characteristics and intention to quit denotes the importance of interventions aimed at engaging employees.

It is clear from these findings that while organisational interventions that are implemented to optimise business results and reduce employee turnover behaviour should focus on leadership practices and the structure of work, these aspects would not be as effective as they could be without very specific attention given to how they could optimally impact on employee engagement. Businesses should therefore focus on the development and reinforcement of transformational leadership behaviours among an organisation's leaders and managers with specific focus on how it influences the structure of work and the motivating potential of a job. While the structure of work for the optimal motivating potential of a job is important in the greater context of the relationship between transformational leadership, employee

engagement and intention to quit, specifically for the influence it has on work engagement, focusing on the structure of work alone will however have little effect on the intention to quit unless it delivers a positive affective and cognitive state characterised by absorption, energy and fulfilment at an individual level. The constructs transformational leadership, employee engagement and the motivating potential of a job therefore have a very important relationship in the mitigation of turnover intentions and, ultimately, turnover behaviour, and in affecting business unit performance in an organisation.

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Appendix A

**P.O. Box 15276
Emerald Hill
Port Elizabeth
6011**

The relationship between Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. The questionnaire you will be completing is designed to explore the relationships between perceived leader behaviours, employee engagement, job characteristics and employee intentions to quit in organizations.

The questionnaire consists of five sections and will take +/- 20 minutes to complete:

1. Section A: Biographical Information
2. Section B: Employee Engagement
3. Section C: Leadership
4. Section D: Intention to Quit
5. Section E: Job Diagnostics

Before you embark on completing this questionnaire, you are requested to carefully read the consent form attached and tick the consent box presented before the biographical section of the questionnaire.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

(E. P. Landman)

Appendix B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Relationship between Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

You are requested to participate in a research study conducted by Elzette Pieterse-Landman, from the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this research study will contribute to the completion of her Master's thesis, which forms part of her MComm (Psych) degree. You are selected as a participant in this study because you are a valued employee of The Company, and the company decided to participate in this research to obtain objective information which will be of value to both the company and its employees.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Job Characteristics and the Intention to Quit within organisations.

2. PROCESS

As a volunteer to participate in this study, you are requested to carefully consider and answer all questions within each section (A to E) of the questionnaire individually, honestly and as objectively as possible. When completing your questionnaire, please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers and that your responses are treated with utmost confidentiality.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No reasonably foreseeable physical and/or psychological potential risks or discomforts are anticipated during the completion of the questionnaire. While some participants may fear the possibility of victimization by providing their results, it is hereby confirmed that at no point will individual results be revealed to anyone. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and anonymity and confidentiality is ensured at all times.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Employees of The Company, The Company as a whole and society and the body of knowledge in the field of Industrial Psychology will derive benefit through a fostered in-depth understanding of the relationship between variables related to specific Leadership Practices (Transformational Leadership), Employee Engagement and Intentions to Quit. Such an understanding may enable the top management in organisations (such as The Company) to develop or adapt internal practices to minimize and or prevent voluntary turnover of personnel, and maximise employee engagement so that The Company can be experienced as an exciting place to work where employees can achieve their potential. It may also assist the organization in trying to adjust the right psychological mix of variables that affect productivity in the organization and overall service delivery both internally and externally.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No participants will receive any form of payment in exchange for participating in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using coding procedures and by means of having only one point of receipt of electronic responses, being the researcher only, whom is an independent person. The participants are not required to write their names or particulars on the questionnaires.

As a participant, you have one of two choices in terms of how you prefer to respond:

- a) You may respond by faxing your completed questionnaire to the researcher. Your fax will be received directly into the e-mail box of the researcher (**see fax number on last page**).
- b) You may respond electronically via e-mail. Your e-mail will be received directly from your e-mail address into the e-mail box of the researcher only (**see e-mail address on last page**).

Please note, should you choose to e-mail, your response will no longer be completely anonymous as it will come from your e-mail address. While the confidentiality of your responses will still be 100% secure in that the researcher is the only receiver, you are encouraged to choose option a) if you wish to maintain 100% anonymity.

Please be assured that maintaining the confidentiality of your individual response is a primary ethical priority to the researcher and will be honoured at all times during collection of data, analysis of data and results and reporting on the outcomes of this study. Any information and data that is obtained through the conduct of this study will not be made available to any unauthorised person. This

information will remain confidential and will be disclosed only in summary form within the interpretation of the results of this study. No individual results will ever be disclosed without obtaining the written permission of a participant as required by law.

In the event that the results of this research study should be published, confidentiality is still maintained due to the fact that results are analysed and reported on in collective or group summary form.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

As participation in this study is voluntary, you may withdraw your participation any time you wish to do so. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Elzette Pieterse-Landman (Researcher) at EPL Consulting on the telephone numbers: (079) 512 6818 all hours, or email: eplandman@telkomsa.net. Alternatively, participants are free to contact Mr Gawie Cillie the Department of Industrial Psychology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch (021-808 3595).

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact Ms Maléne Fouche (mfouche@sun.ac.za / 021 8084622) at the Division of Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please consider the instructions at the top of each table in detail and complete the respective questions to follow accordingly. Remember that your responses to this questionnaire are confidential and will not be revealed to any person other than the researcher. Please therefore DO NOT write your name or employee number or any other identity number anywhere on this document.

☐

This serves to confirm that I understand the consent form and that my participation in this research is voluntary.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Your biographical information is important in this study for statistical purposes. Remember that your information will not be revealed to any person other than the researcher. Please mark with an x within the appropriate box that contains the information that best describes your biographical information.

Length of Service	Less than 6 months	6 - 12 months	1 - 2 years	2 - 5 years	5 - 10 years	10 - 20 years	21 + years
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Age	Under 20	20 – 25	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 55	56 and older	
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Home Language	English	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Other (please specify):			
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Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed		
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Highest Qualification	Grade 10 / Std. 8	Grade 12 / Matric	Post-matric certificate	Diploma	Degree	Hons / Master's	PhD
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Race	African	Coloured	White	Indian	Other (please specify):		
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Paterson Job Grade	C3 to C5	D1 to D3	D4 and D5	E Band			
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Gender	Male	Female					
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SECTION B: ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of this survey is to discover how various employees view their work. Below there are statements of work-related feelings. Please note that work in this context refers to the general tasks you complete (i.e. a cook's general tasks are preparing food, prepping food, etc.) Please use the scale provided below and mark with a cross (x) the appropriate number on the right to indicate how often you feel the following.		Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Every Day
1	I feel emotionally numb.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I wish I was in a different profession.	1	2	3	4	5
3	My work is worthy of attention.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I contribute something meaningful while working.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I feel a sense of fulfilment most of the day.	1	2	3	4	5
6	While working, I do not have much energy.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I feel absorbed while working.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I have a lack of attention while working.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I can work for long periods of time.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I find my work engrossing.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I get immersed in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I enjoy a challenge while working.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: LEADERSHIP

The aim of this section is to provide a description of leadership. Please describe the leadership style of your direct supervisor/manager when answering the following questions. For each statement, please indicate how often the person you report to displays the behaviour described, by using the following 6-point scale (Almost Never to Almost Always). For example: If you feel your supervisor is once in a while absent when you need him/her, then mark with a cross (x) the number 2.		Almost Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Frequently	Almost Always
1	My immediate supervisor/manager acts in ways that builds my respect.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	My immediate supervisor/manager re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	My supervisor/manager talks about his/her most important values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	My immediate supervisor/manager seeks differing perspectives when solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	My immediate supervisor/manager talks optimistically about the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	My immediate supervisor/manager instils pride in being associated with him/her.	1	2	3	4	5	6

7	My supervisor/manager talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	My supervisor/manager specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	My supervisor/manager spends time supporting and coaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	My supervisor/manager goes beyond his/her self-interest for the good of the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	My supervisor/manager treats you as an individual rather than just as a member of the group	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	My supervisor/manager considers the moral and ethical consequences of his/her decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	My supervisor/manager displays a sense of power and confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	My supervisor/manager articulates a compelling vision of the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	My supervisor/manager considers me as having different needs, abilities and aspirations from others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	My supervisor/manager gets me to look at problems from many different angles.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	My supervisor/manager helps me to develop my strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	My supervisor/manager suggests new ways of looking at how to complete tasks/assignments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	My supervisor/manager emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	My supervisor/manager expresses confidence that goals will be achieved.	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION D: INTENTION TO QUIT

The aim of this section is to determine to what extent employees feel they would leave the company if they had the opportunity to. <u>Please note that this information will at no point be presented to the company in individual format nor can it or will it be used in performance appraisals. The results of this section like every other section of this survey will be reported in collective form only.</u> Please mark with a cross (x) inside the box to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I am actively looking for another job outside of The Company.	1	2	3	4
2	As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave The Company.	1	2	3	4
3	I often think about leaving The Company.	1	2	3	4
4	I intend to leave The Company as soon as I possibly can.	1	2	3	4
5	If another organisation offered me a job right now, I would leave The Company even if the salary were to be equal to my present salary.	1	2	3	4

SECTION E: JOB DIAGNOSTICS

The Job Diagnostic Survey is used to diagnose jobs and how people react to them. The questionnaire is useful in determining how jobs can be better designed, by obtaining information about how people react to different kinds of jobs. This part of the questionnaire asks you to describe your job, as objectively as you can.

Please do not use this part of the questionnaire to show how much you like or dislike your job. Questions about that will come later. Instead, try to make your descriptions as accurate and as objective as you possibly can.

To what extent does your job require you to work with mechanical equipment?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Very little; the job requires almost no contact with mechanical equipment of any kind.

Moderately.

Very much; the job requires almost constant work with mechanical equipment.

If, for example, your job requires you to work with mechanical equipment a good deal of the time - but also requires some paperwork - you might indicate a number 6 by circling the number on the line above.

If you do not understand these instructions, please contact the researcher on 079 512 6818 for assistance.

PART 1

1

How much autonomy is there in your job? That is, to what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about doing the work?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Very little; the job gives me almost no personal "say" about how and when the work is done.

Moderate autonomy; many things are standardised and not under my control, but I can make some decisions about the work.

Very much; the job gives me almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is done.

2

To what extent does your job involve doing a "whole" and identifiable piece of work? That is, is the job a complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end? Or is it only a small part of the overall piece of work, which is finished by other people or by automatic machines?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

My job is only a tiny part of the overall piece of work; the results of my activities cannot be seen in the final product or service.

My job is a moderate-sized "chunk" of the overall piece of work; my own contribution can be seen in the final outcome.

My job involves doing the whole piece of work, from start to finish; the results of my activities are easily seen in the final product or service.

3

How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Very little; the job requires me to do the same routine things over and over again.

Moderate variety.

Very much; the job requires me to do many different things, using a number of different skills and talents.

4	In general, how significant or important is your job? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?		
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7			
Not very significant; the outcomes of my work are not likely to have important effects on other people.		Moderately significant.	Highly significant; the outcomes of my work can affect other people in very important ways.

5	To what extent does doing the job itself provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the actual work itself provide clues about how well you are doing - aside from any "feedback" co-workers or supervisors may provide?		
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7			
Very little; the job itself is set up so that I could work forever without finding out how well I am doing.		Moderately; sometimes doing the job provides "feedback" to me; sometimes it does not.	Very much; the job is set up so that I get almost constant "feedback" as I work about how well I am doing.

PART 2								
Listed below are a number of statements which could be used to describe a job. Be as objective as you can in deciding how accurately each statement describes your job - regardless of whether you like or dislike your job. Please place a cross (x) over the number that you choose for each statement below. How accurate is the statement in describing your job?		Very Inaccurate	Mostly Inaccurate	Slightly Inaccurate	Uncertain	Slightly Accurate	Mostly Accurate	Very Accurate
1	The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The job is arranged so that I can do an entire piece of work from beginning to end.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Just doing the work required by the job provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	The job allows me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well the work gets done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	The job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative and judgement in carrying out the work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	The job provides me with the chance to completely finish the pieces of work that I begin.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	After I finish a job, I know whether I performed well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	The job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART 3								
Now please indicate how you personally feel about your job. Each of the statements below is something that a person might say about his or her job. Please indicate your own personal feelings about your job by indicating with a cross (x) the number that shows to what extent you agree with each of the statements below. How much do you agree with the statement?		Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Neutral	Agree Slightly	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	My opinion of myself goes up when I do this job well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do this job well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I seldom think of quitting this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I feel good and happy when I discover that I have performed well on this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	My own feelings are generally affected by how well I do in this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART 4								
Now please indicate how satisfied you are with each aspect of your job listed below. Please indicate with a cross (x) over the number that you choose to show how satisfied are you with this aspect of your job?		Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
1	The amount of personal growth and development I get in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment I get from doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	The amount of independent thought and action I can exercise in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	The amount of challenge in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART 5								
Please think of the other people in your organization who hold the same job that you do. If no one has exactly the same job as you, think of the job which is most similar to yours (or most other people in such a job or job level). Please think about how accurately each of the statements describes the feelings of those people about the job. It is quite all right if your answers here are different from when you described your own reactions to the job. Often different people feel quite differently about the same job. Please place a cross (x) over the appropriate number on the right to indicate how much do you agree with the statement?		Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Neutral	Agree Slightly	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	Most people in this job feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when they do the job well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Most people in this job are very satisfied with the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	People in this job seldom think of quitting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Most people in this job feel good or happy when they find that they have performed the work well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please send your completed questionnaire to the following destination:

Attention: EP Landman

Fax # 086 219 5463

Or (only if personally preferred)

e-mail it to

eplandman@telkomsa.net

(Confidentiality is ensured at all times!)